University of Alberta

THE TRUTH WAS IN IT: HISTORY, PERCEPTION, KNOWLEDGE, AND RELATIONSHIP IN A SUBARCTIC COMMUNITY

by

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Abstract

This study explores and compares the historical perceptions presented in texts written by northern explorers, traders, and missionaries with the as-lived and storied accounts of Aboriginal Elders in the community of Ft. Smith, Northwest Territories, Canada. Ft. Smith is situated at the end of a sixteen-mile portage on the Slave River, once the river route north and important in exploration, fur trade, mission, government, and resource development history. Due to the portage and the time it took to complete, all travelers spent time here; almost all published accounts include descriptions of Ft. Smith, its people, and history. These accounts are cited as authoritative by non-Aboriginal newcomers to the community and in historical and educational materials. Community Elders hold their own accounts of what makes for history, who holds historical knowledge, and how knowledge is developed and communicated.

An ethnographic approach involving participant observation, interviews with Elders, and collaboration with community advisors was used. Participants typically presented the perspectives of the Elders of their own youth in the form of narratives of family, experience, agency, truth, knowledge, and power. How we perceive history is based on and within our culture, experience, and the narratives we have been told and tell to illustrate their meanings. For local Aboriginal peoples, history has been based in the context of life on the land and in the communities, in family, in interconnected relationship, and in the storied lives of respected knowledge holders. Thus the accounts of history presented in these Elders' accounts proved to be quite different

from Euro-Canadian versions both culturally and in terms of contextual and institutional forms of representation. Our perception of history influences our views on location, experience, and authenticity. In this context, the truth was seen as “in it” — in story and context — no simple answer to historical questions could be given — there was “always a story behind it.” Stories also contained strategies of response to varying environmental and social conditions instrumental to adaptive and resilient social systems. At the same time, variation in historical frames of location and experience continues to influence community wide social, institutional, and economic development.

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Note: Terminology and Content

The use of the term Aboriginal in this paper requires discussion. There is no single Aboriginal perspective, there is much diversity; yet, I have often used this term in a generalized sense. In Canada this term refers to First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Non-Status peoples. Peoples with varying cultural backgrounds and traditions are included in the use of this term. However, holistic conceptualizations of environment, relationship, responsibility, respect, and forms of learning and coming to knowledge are often fundamental to the values and worldview of Aboriginal peoples. Experiences as peoples with a particular historical relationship with Canadian state institutions, legislation, and policy have also influenced Aboriginal identities. I have used specific terminology to refer to issues affecting First Nations or Métis peoples in particular. Older terms, including 'Indian' and 'Native,' have been used when referring to material from time periods when these terms were common.

In referring to Ft. Smith and other communities in the region I have, at times, used local terminology including Smith for Ft. Smith and Fitz. or Fitzgerald for Ft. Fitzgerald. This work has attempted to provide as much context as possible within the format of an academic dissertation. It is with this in mind that I have used these local names. The term Elder is used in several different ways, as is typical in this community. One knows through experience and context what form is being used. For example, when one speaks of serving all the Elders at a feast first you are speaking of all the older people. However, if one says, "you might talk to the Elder about that" one is usually referring to a specific Elder who holds knowledge that may assist people with a particular type of concern.

This work is organized in five chapters. I have not included a stand-alone chapter as a literature review. Along with the research rationale, a brief review of literature is included in Chapter One. Relevant literature is also included throughout the text. Chapter Two covers material on the narrative methodology used and discusses issues of ethical concern. Chapter Three presents the material given to me by six interview participants from the research community. Chapter Four includes analysis of Western accounts of fur trade, travel, and government. Finally, Chapter

Five portrays strategies of response given changing conditions, discusses theoretical implications, and draws conclusions relevant to the study as a whole.

CHAPTER 1: THE STUDY: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Introduction

Stories are embedded within relationship and framed from within culture. The same events can influence and be remembered in very different ways. We construct, transmit, think, choose, and resist in narrative. At the same time we know that story, in the context of systems of power, can become master narrative and hegemonic in power. When people holding dominant worldviews attempt to come to grips with the stories of other peoples, historically, they have often responded by: 1). replacing or integrating them with their own narratives, 2). dismissing locally narrated histories as ignorant or irrelevant, or on the other hand, as intriguingly exotic or 3).by categorizing and labeling them in disempowering ways. This research explores these issues in the context of comparative narratives of location, experience, perception, and relationship in a northern Canadian community. The discussion encompasses three primary areas: that of the relational, environmental, and historical context as presented by members of the Aboriginal community of Ft. Smith as compared with the accounts of traders, adventurers, missionaries, and civil servants. My own interaction with these narratives as I carried out this study is also addressed. This chapter serves not only as an introduction to the research, research questions and their rationale, but also includes material on the research setting. A review of background literature relevant to comparisons of Aboriginal and Western approaches to history and to the study of oral tradition is included before returning to material on the significance of this particular study.

As Eric Wolf (1997) points out, a community like Ft. Smith is not unconnected to global historical and economic forces. In this case, the community has been influenced by trans-national economic forces since the days of the fur trade (Innis, 1930/1999; McCormack, 1984; Wolf, 1997; Kardulias, 1990). At the same time, local people have their own perceptions, their own stories of these processes (see Appendix A and D). There are several problems with the story as presented in dominant accounts; first, is the one-sidedness of this "history," the almost invisibility of and fairly consistent depiction as "less than" of the people who guided, transported, and worked for the writers of these accounts. While challenging scholars to "read beyond" standard fur trade sources, Brown and Vibert (1996) note that the accounts of fur traders are too often accepted uncritically without deconstructing the culturally embedded assumptions held regarding Aboriginal peoples, how they lived, and what motivated their actions. As Edward Bruner (1986a) reminds us, dominant narratives, like those of the fur trade and the linked economic, social, and technological development (Innis, 1930) are "units of power as well as meaning." (p. 19). Given these dynamics, Ft. Smith's history, for the most part, found in oral accounts, in place, and in community relationships has been overshadowed by the Western histories found in texts. An additional concern with the dominant narrative is that until very recently the accounts produced inevitably concluded with the assimilation of local Aboriginal peoples as "Canada Moves North" (Finnie, 1948, Gellar, 1995), or as a report produced by the federal Department of Mines and Resources put it in 1947:

> It is confidently felt that increasing settlement and a great development of the resources of the Territories, will open up new avenues of employment for the Indians, lower their heavy infant mortality and through a general improvement in their living conditions, arouse in them new vigour and new ambitions. Of their ultimate fate there can be little doubt. Within another hundred years they may have been completely absorbed into the white race and will retain but the vaguest memory of their past history. (p. 15)

What has not been presented in a written format, except in a few locally produced accounts of oral history and remembrance (Bird, 1991; Maldaver, 1993; Sutherland, 1996) is the other version, the "as experienced" history of local peoples. This history is equally as rich and colorful and it also includes memorable accounts of people, events, and location. These accounts are maintained within the oral histories, traditional stories, and narratives of interconnected experience of local Métis, Chipewyan, and Cree peoples. This omission is not an atypical pattern; it is the norm in Canadian historical accounts. H. Devine (2004), citing Peterson and Anfinson (1984), in her recent social history of a Métis family (the Desjarlais family), during the fur trade era in western Canada, notes the continuing challenge of the:

> dependence upon sources skewed in favor of literate or white or high ranking employees has limited investigation and understanding of lower ranking personnel and particularly of the large numbers of seasonally or irregularly employed freemen and native or Métis transporters, middle men, provisioners, guides, and servants. (p. 240)

For example, included in the appendices is the account of North West Company (NWCo.) trader Peter Pond's entrance into the Great Slave Lake region in the mid-1780s as told by Ft. Smith patriarch, Francois Beaulieu (Appendix A). This account was recorded, late in Beaulieu's long life, by Father Emile Petitot (Govt. of the Northwest Territories, 1976). At the same time, most texts written about Pond indicate that no information on Pond's first trip to Great Slave Lake is available (Innis, 1930), meaning that no written account has survived (Duckworth, 1990). The reasons for this view may be related to the perception of the validity of oral versus textual accounts within the meta-narratives of Canadian exploration and history. Additionally, the background assumptions of most of the writers of earlier accounts prevented them from seeing this local history or the experience of local people as *the story*, as the most relevant and authentic history of experience in this region. Brown (1990) notes the role fur trade accounts have held in framing viewpoints that continue in many ways unexamined today. Further, the producers of these accounts were usually immersed in the telling of their own story(ies) to their own audiences for their own personal and culturally based reasons. Thus the textual accounts, whether produced for popular, academic, or government audiences remain firmly within Western cultural frames of exploration, trade, adventure, technological, and economic development.

This issue is important, as Ricouer (1999) reminds us, in the contexts of relations with "others." Ricouer notes that the description of what may be considered a pivotal event or a founding narrative from one perspective may be experienced as a wound opening abrasive from another. It becomes a matter of ethics to remember in ways that "tell otherwise" or allow marginalized perspectives to be heard. The moral duty then is to tell or better yet to let people tell. In this context, teaching then becomes remembering, amnesty becomes not simple forgetting but forgiving, and the process itself begins the "evolution of a culture of *just memory*" [italics original] (p.11).

Research Questions

Given this background, the intent of this project was to explore and compare the views of community history, as held within Western accounts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the "as lived" experience of Aboriginal community members from Ft. Smith, Northwest Territories, Canada. Thus broadly speaking, the proposed research was aimed at gathering narrative accounts from community Elders in order to explore the role of historically responsive personal experiences as embedded filters in the maintenance, transmission, and evolution of strategies used to relate to European and Canadian institutions over the years. An ethnographic and narrative methodological approach allowed me to describe the experience and perceptions of Aboriginal Elders in the community as shared in interviews and through participant observation.

The study also explores whether these perspectives influenced strategies used to relate to Western institutions over the years. The central concepts studied were *historical perception* as a component of cultural identity and *strategic relations* with Western institutions and the *experience* of both. The objective of the study is, then, *to understand the process whereby Aboriginal Elders in the community of Ft. Smith have engaged in exploring and responding to historical events over the last century.* Research questions included the following:

1. *How do community perspectives on history compare with Western perspectives?*
2. *What is the process of interpretation used by the Elders?*
3. *What impact did their interpretation have on the strategies used to interact with people, programs, and policies within and beyond the community?*

These questions have, in many ways, already been answered, at least for the Dene of the north Mackenzie area, by Dene Elder George Blondin in his two books: *When the World Was New* (1990) and *Yamoria the Law Maker* (1997) along with his numerous *News North* columns. Although I had read and admired his work for many years, I hadn't understood it in this way before undertaking this project. In many ways what I accomplished in this study was simply coming to the recognition that what he was presenting forms a very different, as compared to Western accounts, but very authentic and powerful stance towards history, similar to what I found in this study. At the same time, this was not the only perspective as discussion of Métis experience attests.

Western Narratives of North

Until recently, Canada's narrative of relations with Indigenous peoples held that the Canadian experience of settlement involved processes that were, for the most part, benevolent, were directed towards social and economic development on behalf of Aboriginal peoples, and in any case, were certainly not as destructive as what took place in the United States. For example, in the introduction to one of the northern travel texts reviewed for this study, Ferguson (1932), then High Commissioner for Canada in London comments:

> We perceive that the giving way of the wilder Indian tribes before the rule of the white man was inevitable from the first no matter how humane and just the treatment of the natives. In this respect it is now and always has been the pride of the Canadian authorities that the best traits of the Indian have been carefully developed and his interests preserved. (p. 6)

The credit for this narrative, of activity "in their best interest," has often been attributed, in northern and western Canada to the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). The Hudson's Bay Company has been described as paving the way for "the Indian to respect the white man and in a measure to acknowledge his authority" thus easing the eventual transfer to government control (Stewart, 1913, p. 254). Sir Donald Smith, Lord Strathcona, congratulates the Company in this effort at the annual Hudson's Bay meeting of the 3rd of July, 1900:

> The company has passed through 200 years of its existence as a governing body, and this is its 230th year of existence as a corporate body, and its business was carried on for some years earlier. I think it must be a source of

> great gratification to the honourable proprietors that during that long time those responsible have so managed and administered the affairs of the Company in meeting with the native tribes as to gain their confidence to an extent which I believe has never been experienced in any other instance either in the colonies of the Empire or the United States. (MacFarlane, 1913, p. 25)

Upholding these myths about the nature of the Aboriginal experience in Canada, particularly those of the twentieth century, can and should be hard to do in the context of health and economic statistics. The testimonial accounts of many of the Aboriginal people who have spoken out about the impact of the residential school system on themselves and their families add to this picture. At the same time, acknowledging these realities does not reduce the experience or the story to that of victims without agency. Nor does the story of agency and self-determination remove the realities of colonial processes as embodied in lives. Nevertheless, given this dynamic, this study highlights not only the attitudes, legislation, and policies that impacted lives but also the narratives and strategies used by Aboriginal peoples in response to these events while remaining cognizant of the very real constraints experienced.

In an attempt to control, make amends, come to terms with or put into frameworks we understand many Euro-Canadians tend to use the method of writing about "them." Reading and writing, and talking about reading and writing, is, in many ways, how we have been taught to learn about and share our thoughts regarding experiences that puzzle us and then to share our new found understanding with others. For Aboriginal peoples their response, in turn, has been expressed in many ways including though humor, standpoint, connection with others, by developing networks of Indigenous action, and more recently political and literary writing through [of] these experiences.

Narratives of identity as Indigenous peoples connected through patterns of colonial history, colonial dynamics as experienced through Western institutions and legislation, and efforts at resistance to the Euro-Canadian historical narrative have been increasingly common in Canada since the time of Harold Cardinal's (1969) influential book, *The Unjust Society*. Other early works in Canada include *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* by Manuel and Posluns (1974), and *Prison of Grass:*

Canada from a Native Viewpoint by Métis scholar, Howard Adams (1975). For the Dene in the Northwest Territories, a collection edited by Mel Watkins (1977), *Dene Nation: The Colony Within* influenced these changing visions. Robert Paine (1977) contributed by exploring the development of "welfare colonialism" and tutelage in the Arctic.

The story of Ft. Smith as it is usually told, however, is one of exploration, annexation, and technological innovation in the linked story of trade and development: each stage leading inexorably and progressively to the next. This is a rich and colorful history with many memorable accounts produced by explorers, fur traders, and travelers, for the most part, once they were "safely back at home" (Back, 1836; Butler, 1872, 1873; Cameron, 1909; Franklin, 1823, 1829, 1859; Hanbury, 1904; Hearne, 1795; Mackenzie, 1801; Pike, 1892; Rae, 1850; Russell, 1896; Seton, 1911; Whitney, 1898). These accounts are considered "classics" of the Canadian narrative of northern identity. Recently, popular texts retelling the original journeys of Samuel Hearne (1771-72), Mackenzie (1789 and 1793) and George Back (1821, 1825-26) have been published (Hayes, 2001; McGoogan, 2003, Steele, 2004). Steele's (2004) book on George Back is titled, *The Man who Mapped the Arctic*, yet no reference is made to Backs' reliance on Native informants, including informants from the Ft. Smith area, for travel directions. *First Crossing* (2001) by Derek Hayes also emphasizes congratulatory claims to Euro-Canadian territory and accomplishment, in this case in light of the emphasis on the American adventures of Lewis and Clark, often erroneously referred to as first to cross the continent rather than Mackenzie. At the same time, Hayes' book inaccurately uses a 1900 photo of running the Slave River rapids in a scow on the cover to portray Mackenzie's use of canoes on another route (to the Pacific) over a hundred years earlier.

Ft. Smith and the major portage required here, served as a gateway to these stories; perhaps as a kind of boat locks, between what was experienced by non-Aboriginal travelers and residents, at the time, as either "inside" or "outside" of what was often perceived of as the "real" world (J. Godsell, 1959). This is psychologically understandable, nevertheless it has had an alienating impact, splintering homeland into hinterland, centre into periphery. Almost everyone who wrote about their experiences in this region over the last two hundred years held this perspective. Material on Ft. Smith, the river, and the people was included in almost every account published due to the significance of the rapids, the portaging involved, and, in many cases, the need to obtain guides for travel further north.

Situating the Literature

Many classic texts of northern exploration and adventure have been published over the years, most with many editions. Many of these works are still published today and are also available in electronic form. In a different vein, an early influential work of ethnohistory and political development, reissued in 2004, was Rene Fumoleau's (1974) ground breaking account of the making of and implementation (or rather lack thereof) of Treaties 8 and 11 in the Northwest Territories. More recently Abel (1993) and McCarthy (1995) have published valuable social histories involving the region as a whole. McCarthy's (1995) work on the history and context of the Oblate missions was much needed, going far beyond the early twentieth century work of Duchaussois (1923). Her interest is not simply in the celebration and commemoration of people and events but rather in analysis of the history of the Oblates as interlinked with Aboriginal peoples in the Mackenzie region. Abel (1993), while more skeptical of the influence of the Oblates, aims, through a broad use of sources, to tell the story of Dene history through the last two centuries. Nevertheless, while each makes important contributions, for the most part both these books remain stories of development rather than experience.

Several edited collections of particular significance for the study of this region are useful in that they cover a range of topics thus presenting an overview of current areas of study in northern social science research (McCormack & Ironside, 1988, 1993; Abel & Coates, 2001). Articles by Brown (1990, 1993) and McCormack (1993) in the first two volumes are of particular use in challenging some of the social, economic, and historical assumptions in regards to region, fur trade, and economic and political agency. Recent work by graduate students focuses on issues influencing the attempts of northern First Nations to describe Aboriginal perspectives on resource use and political development (Edge, 2001; S. Smith, 1999; Wishart et al., 1999). None of these works are located in Ft. Smith, a community inclusive of three Aboriginal identities (Métis, Chipewyan, and Cree) and a large non-Aboriginal population. This community make-up results in a unique and very complex set of political, social, cultural, and economic relationships. Based in Ft. Chipewyan, Alberta, Patricia McCormack's dissertation (1984) presents a comprehensive look at responses to economic forces and changing government institutions and policy discourses. She addresses forces that acted in a similar, although not identical, fashion in this research context.

Considerable ethnographic work involving subarctic Algonquian and Athapascan peoples across Canada has been completed. This material typically focuses on the nature of knowing and on traditional relationships with environment (E. Basso, 1978; Brightman, 1993; Brody, 1988; Christian and Gardner, 1977; Cruikshank, 1990; Feit, 1973, 1994, 1997; Guedon, 1994; Goulet, 1994, 1998; Hallowell, 1960, 1992; Helm, 1965, 1994; Honigman, 1981a, 1981b; Irimoto, 1994; Jarvenpa, 1974, 1998; Mills, 1986; Nelson, 1983; Preston, 1975; Ridington, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1997; Rushforth, 1992; Sharp, 1987, 1997, 2001; D. Smith, 1973, 1982, 1997, 1998; J. Smith, 1981a, 1981b, 1987; T. S. Smith, 1995; & Tanner, 1979). These works are quite pertinent to the understanding of the oral interview material in this study. Cruikshank (1990, 1999a), Goulet (1998) and Ridington (1987, 1988, 1990) were particularly useful, each taking an interactional and collaborative approach to their own learning from Aboriginal teachers. The work of D. M. Smith (1973, 1997, 1998, 2002) and Sharp (1986, 1987, 1997, 2001), with Chipewyan peoples, was valuable to my understanding of cosmological issues. They often referred to stories connected to stories I was told. Additionally, Moore & Wheelock (1986), Scollon & Li (1976), and Scollon & Scollon (1981) have produced works on Athabascan narrative and linguistic issues that assist in understanding culturally and linguistically based communication styles.

Slobodin's early text (1966), *The Metis of the Mackenzie District*, and his later chapter in the *Subarctic* volume of the Smithsonian Handbook (1981) are the primary published accounts dealing with the Métis community of the region. An unpublished collection, *Picking up the Threads: Métis History in the Mackenzie Basin*, produced through a partnership with the Métis Heritage Association of the Northwest Territories and Parks Canada, takes a very different tack, towards the nature of the indigenous (rather than Red River) origin of local Métis families (Slobodin, 1966, 1981; M. Devine, 1998). This is a matter of both personal and political significance. A recent edited collection on Métis history, *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, takes another look at a number of issues such as identity, marital alliances, and the development of large Métis family groupings through new frames (Binnema, et al., 2001). Particularly useful for this study is the work on the Desjarlais family by H. Devine (2001, 2004) which illustrates an adaptive pattern of economic and ethnic identity response given changing historical contexts.

Situating Self

My own story is also an aspect of how I realize the telling of these stories. In this case I came to Ft. Smith through my experience canoeing the shield lakes of the boreal forest. The waterways that could be traveled, and once were, from my home in northern Minnesota to Ft. Smith formed my initial vision of place. I also came to this experience through working with people, often with people struggling with personal and social concerns. As a child my family moved frequently primarily in North America but also internationally. My parents stressed liberal values regarding one's responsibility to respond to social inequities. Later in Ft. Smith, while working as a counselor and social work educator with northern college students, I learned there was something more. In travels on the land, on the waterways, on fall moose hunts, and in winter tent camps I experienced aspects of the wind, the plants, and animals that forced me to think about the advisability of simply charging ahead. Through participation in sweat lodge and other ceremony with friends in Ft. Smith and later Alberta and Saskatchewan, I came to respect the ways of knowing presented by these experiences. Yet I also had to leave Ft. Smith due to my growing discontent with my place of privilege. For example, my secretary a young Aboriginal woman with children the same ages as mine, who dealt with the same school and health clinic as I, got a completely different response from these institutions. Memmi (1966) has described this phenomena as that of the "colonizer who resists" yet no matter how hard they try they stay pegged by others in the same socio-political position and end up leaving.

These background factors may help me to see but they may also prevent me from seeing. They form a base for my subjective understanding; at the same time, the assumptions underlying these views were challenged mightily in the completion of this research. The resulting stress caused me to listen to and think about the personal work of doing and reflecting involved in this research. There seems to be, for many non-Aboriginal northerners, a need to come to terms with experience, with where we are, by reading and writing about this history. In many ways this is also what motivated me. However, my conscious attempt from the outset was towards work on balancing accounts through empowering and decolonizing processes, such as can be, both for myself and for potential readers of the materials produced as a result of this study. Thus I have worked towards local authenticity through personal connection in this community with which I have been involved for over twenty years, through fieldwork, and most importantly by learning from community members willing to share their narratives with me, in as respectful and authentic a manner as possible given the social and historical context.

Community Support

The interests of research supporters and participants from within the community included: (a) to more authentically reflect experience, (b) to present their perceptions of that experience, (c) to contribute to validating that experience, (d) to sharing knowledge with their grandchildren, and (e) to honouring relationships. I also wished to be responsive to the current community commitment to integrate an as lived history into educational, social, and natural resource programs and publications. Therefore this study has emphasized local accounts, Elders' perspectives, informal documents, and traditional ways of knowing. Doing so builds on past scholarship by:

1. providing additional material and points of view,
2. being responsive to the critiques of historical accounts by First Nations and Métis scholars thus adding to this dialogue, and

3. by contributing to local empowerment by highlighting an 'as experienced' response to the usual narrative of this material.

In recent years, Aboriginal scholars, educators, and leaders across North America have been tackling issues of history head on motivated by: (a) the data requirements of land claims and treaty rights research (Cruikshank, 1993; Paulette, 2001; Venne, 1998), (b) the need to demythologize the "facts" as interpreted mainly by Western scholars and thus reclaim history and methods for knowing history (Fleuras & Elliot, 1999; Henderson, 2000a, 2000b; Laroque, 1996; Stevensen, 1998), (c) the need for Aboriginal youth to find their own face (Cajete, 2000b) reflected in authentic knowledge of their own past as an aspect of positive futures (Battiste, 2000a, 2000b) often through "giving voice to the ancestors"(Kirkness, 1992, p. 145), and (d) the need to confront the racist and dominant constructs inherent in institutions that either by action or inaction sustains these views (Alfred, 1999; Battiste, 2000 b; Henderson, 2000a & b; Laroque, 1996; Miheusah, 2004).

This research was supported by the Fort Smith Métis Council, Salt River First Nation, Smith's Landing First Nation, and the Town of Ft. Smith. It is my hope that this study will be useful. Whether the people of the community find this material of use is for them to say, however, my intention was always based in respect. Nevertheless, the range of reactions to an ethnographer's text as people read what is said about themselves may range from bursts of laughter, to recognition, to outrage (Rosaldo, 1989; Brettell, 1993). It is not my intention to present the results of this study as a definitive text; rather, it is the account of interaction, learning, and questions explored in the context of the research issue, literature review, dialogue, and the relational circumstances of the study.

Contextualizing the Research Approach

My original intention when I began PhD work was to complete a more applied project focused on cross-cultural comparison of the values and goals of parents in regards to their children's education and conditions which would foster cooperation. I came to believe, however, that as a non-Aboriginal researcher, I needed to engage first in work towards gaining a broader understanding of experience and values as formed by the culturally based interaction of the community's Métis and First Nations peoples with historical events and interpretations. Reference to history is made frequently in this community by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal residents; however, what this means is often very different across cultural groups as are notions on the location and proper verification of that history.

History and how it is experienced, perceived, and presented is always contested. It is doubly so in the context of the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state. For example, as an aspect of the early field research for this study I attended the hearings in Edmonton of the Benoit Case. Gordon Benoit grew up in Ft. Smith. This case involved taxation and the promises of Treaty 8 commissioners in 1899 "that no taxation would be imposed," as acknowledged in a letter to parliament accompanying the signed treaty. This case had broad implications for the community's two First Nations. In this case similar to other recent court cases (Cruikshank, 1992b; Chamberlin, 1996), the testimony of Elders based on oral tradition was presented as oppositional to that of professional historians based on their understanding of written texts. While the Benoit case was won at the Alberta Supreme Court it was lost at the Appeal court. In his decision the Appeal Court judge emphasizes the testimony of an expert witness (von Gernet) whose views on oral history and memory are located soundly within Western historical and psychological conceptions. The appeal judge indicated that Francois Paulette's testimony, which the original judge relied heavily on, should be thrown out as, then in his early fifties and by his own response to questioning, he was not an Elder (Federal Court of Appeal, 2003). The Supreme Court of Canada later declined to hear the case.

Oral history and the oral tradition have been understood in a variety of ways in recent years as interpreted by courts, Aboriginal scholars, and academics (Cruikshank, 1992b, 1999b, 2002; Chamberlin, 1996, 1999; Dauenhauer & Dauenhaeur, 1999; Finnegan, 1970; Mather, 1995; Ong, 1982; Stevenson, 1998, R.C. Smith, 2002; Tosh, 2000; Vansina, 1961; Von Gernet, 1996). The value of oral tradition is it's "ability to recreate a situation for someone who had not experienced it so that the listener could benefit directly from the narrator's experience" (Cruikshank, 1993, p. 138). Oral tradition is processual rather than fixed. Oral history, communicated within the oral tradition, has been described as "the raw material of social memory" (p. 202) by Tosh

(2000). At the same time, Stevenson (1998) reminds us that "all Indigenous oral histories are not alike," that "how stories are organized, and how they overlap, as well as, the rules that govern their keeping and transmission" (p. 26) vary.

Cruikshank (1995, 1999) maintains that rather than looking simply at comparative truth claims, (while acknowledging the greater validity given to textual accounts) the issue is one of identifying culturally based cognitive maps, metaphors, and ways of thinking as their meaning is explored in the social histories of stories not only as they have been but also as they will continue to be communicated in today's contexts. She reminds us of the relational context of stories and the challenges of seeing stories once recorded as simply another form of text.

For the purposes of this research I was most interested in oral representations from within culture and experience on how people perceive and represent history. This means that what is presented to the researcher may include stories, legends, personal experiences, and oral accounts passed on through relations of learning and practice. I was interested in how local people have related to the assumptions of Canadian history brought with the southern Canadians who became "Northern" administrators, trappers, traders, and teachers who then ended up producing their own narratives as "northerners" Narratives are often embedded within narrative so thoroughly that we may not be aware of their origins (Macintyre, 1981). This is certainly the case in the story of the Canadian North. Deconstructing these textual accounts of "The North" allows for exploration of their impact today; it allows for a genealogical reconstructing of history as a dialogue with the present (Foucault, 1998). Nevertheless, this study is not a work of "history" *per se* and I am not a historian, although historically based material is presented. Rather it is an ethnographic study of the genealogy of experience and perception of history from within varying normative views of location and social organization. Differing cultural endowments, perceptions of resources and how they should be appropriately used, and the institutions and technology required to do so (Hayami & Ruttan, 1985; V. Ruttan, 2003) need to be taken into consideration when attempting any such genealogical process.

A variety of assumptions inform this work. As Donohue (1997) notes, "Elders symbolize the ethos of the community and exemplify in their lives and comments the value of its history" (p. 324); thus, working with older people is a good place to start. Encouraged to do so by community members, I reformulated my research question and methodology to explore systems of knowledge and experience within the context of abutting social and political institutions. I hold that what makes for knowledge is grounded in worldview. That this is so does not mean that knowledge systems are completely incommensurable but rather that to understand ways of knowing, ways of truth, you must be aware of the influence of worldview (Appendix G provides an example).

In an attempt to work with local versions of historical experience we must be careful not to simply take with us either an academic or popular version of what makes for history and simply add on an Indigenous overlay. To do so one must listen directly to people in the ways that they prefer to share what they have to say. Understanding perceptions and feelings regarding their own history and how that history and its meaning influences current behavior must start with culturally based methods of learning and understanding, in this case, generally experiential, relational, and narrative. By comparing the narratives or storied accounts of those who have counted in historical recollections of currently marginalized peoples with those who have not, a more representative version of "reality" may be explored.

As Baldwin (1993/1963) notes, in the context of black history in the United States, white history hides black identity. In this case, the varieties of Aboriginal experience, knowledge, and identity are often hidden, replaced, diminished, or dismissed by the dominant story (Adams, 1989). Thus history is told from within systems of power including those informed by racist beliefs and practices. The following quote written by English sports hunter and northern traveler Warburton Pike (1892) regarding his Métis guides, the grandparents and uncles of several of the people interviewed in this study (see also p.169) illustrates differences in worldview overlaid with assumptions of class, power, and racism. His work was widely read and referenced by later travelers.

> From every point of view, then, the Indian of the Great Slave Lake is not a pleasant companion, nor a man to be relied upon in case of emergency. Nobody has yet discovered the right way to manage him. His mind runs on

> different principles from that of a white man, and till the science of thought reading is much more fully developed, the working of his brain will always be a mystery to the fur-trader and traveler. (Pike, 1892/1917, p. 134)

Thus what makes for history may also be complicated by who is included, the uses to which history is to be put, and by issues of attitude which frame the context, identification, and narration of history. Finally, it is also important not to disempower systems of knowledge by holding too tightly to criteria of objectivity and subjectivity held within Western institutions of knowledge. Hallowell's (1960) early articulation based on his work with the Anishnaabe in the 1930's describes these phenomena.

> It may be argued that, in fact, a thoroughgoing "objective" approach to the study of cultures cannot be achieved solely by projecting upon those cultures categorical abstractions derived from Western thought. For, in a broad sense, the latter are a reflection of *our* cultural subjectivity. A higher order of objectivity may be sought by adopting a perspective which includes an analysis of the people themselves as a complementary procedure. It is in a worldview perspective, too, that we can likewise obtain the best insight into how cultures function as wholes. (p. 21)

The Research Setting

On top of the old landslide is a boardwalk leading to an overlook, its deck hanging out over the embankment leading down to the Slave River below. You can stand there, leaning on the railing, and look out at the river, over a mile and half wide here at the end of the rapids. This last set of rapids, the Rapids of the Drowned, was given its name following an accident of communication which resulted in the death of five of Cuthbert Grant's men here in 1788. Next is Mountain Portage, where the ground was once wet with the sweat dripping off the carriers' faces. Further upriver is beautiful Pelican Rapids with its granite peninsula and huge standing waves and above that, just below Fitz., is Cassette Rapids. Two priests paddling out to get a good look at the rapids in 1908 got too close and were swept away here. A big white cross still stands there on the rock to remember them by.

People like to come to this overlook. I used to bring my children here when they were small to run up and down the wheelchair ramp and to hang out over the railing. Couples like to stop here, hand in hand, looking out over the river, watching for the white dots of pelicans on the rocks and in the rapids below; and occasionally, when the wind is right, soaring so slowly above. If you climb down to the rocks, you'll see them close up fishing in the river. And yes there are also broken beer bottles and the burnt sticks of a summer party. Sitting on the cool, polished granite rocks in the summer evenings when dark never really comes is enjoyable. Close to the rapids there is often a big barrel trap for bears when the raspberries are ripe. Bears traveling down the river can end up hanging around the town. In the winter it is white here, the river is frozen except right around the rapids, steam rising high where the water and cold air meet; little spruce trees are placed along the way across to indicate where the ice is solid.

The older people like to come here too. Maggie Kurszewski says, with the gulls flying around, it reminds her of her mother Rosa Mercredi who used to love these birds. We all love to see them in the spring time; their arrival is one of the first signs of spring along with the wooly purple pasque flowers. Looking down below, straight down and also in the bush near where the boat launch is now, the old people can remember all the people who used to camp down there, the Beaulieu's in from Gravel Point or in the fall people netting fish for their dogs. They remember where the road used to come down the hill on an angle before the big landslide in 1968, and where the old boat landing and boat yard was. This was the site of many a launching of canoes and York boats, steamboats coming and going from further "down north," and later steel boats with diesel engines carrying mining equipment north. People used to like to see the big boats off, often cheering as they pulled out. These boats took with them men from the community as deckhands and famous river boat pilots, like Johnny Berens, too. Sometimes there would be tourists wandering around for a few days, off of one boat from the south in Fort Fitzgerald, maybe the old *Echo*, across the long portage and waiting for the next boat to head down the Slave, across the big lake, and down the Mackenzie.

Turning around, I can see past the graveyard and the Roaring Rapids Hall, past the Pine Crest Hotel where Isidore Mercredi's potato fields used to be, to the steeple of the large cathedral and the water tower. The cathedral was built before Yellowknife, with its gold mines, was designated the new capital of the NWT in 1964. Hard to believe, Fort Smith had been the centre of it all for so long. Over there by the cathedral is the old Bishops' residence. And they've moved our oldest church, St. Isidore's, back to its old location just in front of the Grotto that the children helped build in the fifties. There are other buildings held in memory, the first mission hospital built in 1914; and now even the newer one built in 1952 was torn down this year; people still grumbling about whether the asbestos it contained was removed properly or not.

Turning the other way, there is a fringe of trees, then houses all along, just back enough from the river to be out of the landslide zone. Frank Laviolette, who loved buffalo, lived there on Wood Bison Street. And behind that, you come to the new housing co-op and the old "frontier village." The houses in this area of town are new today, but earlier Native people, without too much, lived there in cabins. At the other end of town, still referred to ironically as the "welfare centre," is where the government staff and their families used to live. Nice houses with everything needed were provided to them; sheets, furniture, and silverware to use during their stay in the north.

In the winter you can see the skidoo trails crossing the river below the rapids on their way to traplines across the river, the Taltson Dam or in late winter on further out towards the tree-line to hunt caribou. The kids love sledding here; getting their friends on skidoos to pull them back up the big hill. Today down below you can see pieces of the old bank where it slid. With the sandy river banks we have lots of slides here, usually just little ones, maybe taking a bit of trail. There used to be lots of nice houses along here but in the big slide in 1968 they all went down and Mrs. Ferguson and her little dog were killed. Maryanne MacDonald told me that she had said it was going to happen; she'd lived on the river all her life and she'd heard about bad slides from her old dad. You just couldn't put that much cement on that sand especially with springs underneath it; it was bound to happen, but . . . government people, they just don't listen.

And beyond all that is the bush where not only animals but peoples used to live. On this side, thick spruce along the river; chickens (grouse) scratching along the old dirt roads. Out further there are buffalo on the prairies and moose in the bush. Across the river twenty or thirty miles you come to the first shield lakes and if you keep going, past the area that was burnt in 1979, you come to the winter home of the caribou.

Located just north of the sixtieth parallel, Ft. Smith, earlier known as Thebacha (at the foot of the rapids), was established by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1874. Previously people traveled either to Ft. Chipewyan or Ft. Resolution for trading purposes, although the Beaulieu family did some trading out of Salt River prior to this time. The new post was located here with the expectation that, as Chief Factor MacFarlane recommended, steamboats would soon be traveling the waters of the Mackenzie system (Zaslow, 1971). Doing so would reduce reliance on the traditional boat brigades and increase the amount of goods coming in; putting the local Beaulieu family, who had established a post here a year earlier, out of business, was a side benefit. The new post was named after the then HBC Governor, Donald Smith. Smith, earlier a HBC trader in Labrador, won a famous debate with Louis Riel in Red River in 1869 turning the tide from rebellion. Shortly afterwards, he became Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and later Lord Strathcona, famous for hammering in the trans-Canada railway's Golden Spike.

Ft. Smith is a community of approximately 2, 650 people. Just over sixty percent of the population has an Aboriginal background with Métis being the largest group. Two First Nations are also located in the community. Ft. Smith is situated one hundred and forty feet above the Slave River on a spruce rimmed embankment. Found in the Northwest Territories, just north of the Alberta boundary, it is located on the west side of the river. Ft. Smith was strategically located at the end of the sixteen mile portage required of all individuals and goods traveling further north (see Appendix G for maps). The series of four major sets of rapids found in the stretch between Ft. Fitzgerald and Ft. Smith is the only major barrier to navigation in the seventeen hundred mile water transportation route from Fort McMurray, Alberta to the Arctic Ocean (Camsell, 1954; Mackinnon, 1980). This section of the Mackenzie River system was named the Slave by Samuel Hearne in 1771 after the people who were referred to as the Slaves by his Chipewyan guide, Mattonobee (Hearne, 1955).

Ft. Smith is situated roughly equidistant from the two early settlements of Ft. Fitzgerald, Alberta (Thebathi — at the head of the rapids) and the older settlement of Salt River, established by the Beaulieu family in the late 1830's. What was known earlier as Smith's Landing was renamed Ft. Fitzgerald after the death by starvation in 1911 of RCMP Inspector Fitzgerald of the Lost Patrol. The community of Ft. Fitzgerald, at one time larger than Ft. Smith, was the take-out point for goods transported around the rapids in a variety of ways over the years including oxen drawn Red River carts, wagons pulled by horses usually covered in mosquito netting, and later tractor trains. In earlier years, canoe and York Boat brigades traveled through the rapids making four portages.

A more detailed description of the social, structural, environmental and economic dynamics of the community is included in Appendix B.

Introduction to Views on History

It has often been said that history frames our view of life. Our relationship with our history frames our identity, and the meaning assigned to past events, social and political conditions as well as what become culturally normative behaviors, values, and metaphors. It is equally true that *culture* frames our view of what makes for history. Without knowing our history we may end up not knowing who we are, but without acknowledging the cultural screen we may not be able to explore the potential for multiple interpretations; interpretations whose authenticity is based in cultural norms related to knowledge, knowing, and validity. These perspectives need to be considered and understood as authentic aspects of worldview if we are to gain a comprehensive view of the issues involved.

Given this expanded frame of reference we may then take a look at how these views have been transmitted and what their impact has been. This analysis may assist in exploring how options available for increased understanding may enhance, not only culturally based group influenced identity, agency, and cultural efficacy but also inter-group interaction. Equally important is how and to what degree these systems have been experienced, understood, and resisted and how culture and self-determination have been maintained. How these factors affect the current mix of community values, seemingly based in both tradition and modernity, may then be brought into a more reciprocal reality rather than remaining as eternal historical and political shadows in any dialogue. A thorough analysis, however, must not make the mistake of stopping with the resulting impact of in essence a colonized experience, but must essentially explore the agency of Dene and Métis community members in responding to these forces, including the maintenance of Aboriginal identity and culture.

Western Approaches to History

In the Greco-Roman tradition, history can be seen as a process of *knowing* (theory), as in we know our history through theoretical propositions legitimized by textual discourse informed by proper documentation and method; or of *making* (product) history, as in those individuals and nations who make history; and of *doing* (practice), as in the understanding of historical forces used to bring about action leading towards change. A Western approach to history includes the story of the events that define the progressive development of a society or state over time, including those of conflict over material or symbolic resources, conquest, expansion, and development. These events have often been represented as the story of the individuals, whether of word or deeds, who become immortalized in our accounts of history. This process is exemplified by Carlisle's "great men" and in our continuing interest in historical biographies (Tosh, 2000).

History was also understood to be subject to the forces of inherent natural laws, understandable through reason and exemplified in historical events and the political and social structures of civilization (Palmer & Colton, 1984). From this perspective the Indigenous peoples of North America were viewed as "savages" and "illiterates." The French philosopher Montagne, writing in 1588, while sympathetic to the people of the Americas so "simply pure, in nature's lap," nevertheless describes them as "so new and infantile that he is yet to learn his ABC" (Montagne, 1977, p. 158). Without writing, viewed as an embodiment of the facility of reason, reasonableness could not be expected (Gates, 1986). Hume (1753) held that without writing there is no sign of advanced intellectual capacity and that there never had been (or will be) any civilization that is other than white (Gates, 1986). Following Hume, Kant held that color was in itself indicative of ignorance (Gates, 1986). Hegel takes this argument further, indicating without writing there was no history, and without history and memory there was no civilization (Gates, 1986). Further, this view serves to legitimize the settlement of North America by Europeans as a progressive movement allowing change from a Hobbesian "state of nature" by replacing it with Locke's "civil society" (Henderson, 2000a). Thus the belief in the inevitability of a globalized Eurocentric diffusionism carried from the "centre" to "periphery" (Shils, 1975) by the settlers of the "Neo-Europes" (Crosby, 1986) can be understood, from this perspective, as natural and thus inherently reasonable (Amin, 1989; Asad, 1973; Blaut, 1992; Henderson, 2000b; Wolf, 1997). Moreover, in the context of this study, the world-system aspects of the economic dynamics of the fur trade have been justified based on these assumptions (Kardulias, 1990).

Western historians, for the most part, hold that by using a rational, well-documented, temporal, and linear approach to the study and writing of history we may know not only who we *were*, but also who we *are*, and, in addition, to assist us in formulating who we are likely to *become*. By doing so we are allowed the opportunity to "*learn* the lessons that history has to teach us" thus maximizing economies of experience as knowledge that can be built on. Of interest become the particular categories we use to order and underline historical events, the methods we use to do so, and the arguments and logic by which we make our conclusions. By taking a linear approach our actions become causally understandable as part of an evolutionary process of stepwise historical development and justifiable or at least understandable as such. History, then, is metamorphosed into the explanatory and often hegemonic voice of textual authority, not only in academic or political debate, but also in everyday interaction as in "history tells us" or "throughout history." Thus the nature and location of historical truths need to be considered as does its traditional focus on objectivity in the determining of historical facts to the neglect of subjective and culturally based empiricisms, As Carr (1964) in Tosh (2000) points out: "the facts of history cannot be primarily objective since they become facts of history only in virtue of the significance attached to them by the historian" (p. 113). The study of history and the control of its subject matter, methodology, and interpretation, along with the location and ownership of its linked material objects, hold a powerful role in individual, cultural, and national identification. As such it is subject to ideological and political uses. This is particularly the case in the history of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations in Canada.

These phenomena have led to the perpetuation of historically based "myths" that often serve to support state, professional, or cultural identity (Fixico, 1998; Deloria, 1987, 1997; A. C. Wilson, 1998). This hegemonic validation of the history of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal relationships in North America has resulted in limiting access to information, to material objects, and to the authority of voice including the ongoing debates about the proper interpretation of history as opposed to "revisionist history" (Fixico, 1998; Deloria, 1987; A.C. Wilson, 1998). In Canada, the study of history was seen as having to do with European settlement while Native peoples were left to the realm of anthropologists (Trigger, 1986). As per example, we have the "*two solitudes*" or two "*founding nations*" (French and English) that were seen to make up Canada to the exclusion of Indigenous peoples. Implicit, then, is a romanticized sense of mission which justifies vision and the accompanying narratives of assimilation of both the wildness of the "wilderness" while "domesticating" its peoples. This vision allows for the re-creation of a Western version of safe and familiar homeland while reconstructing wilderness in the form of parks.

Further, not only are empirical research methods required, historical accounts must be documented, published, and reviewed in order to be accepted as valid (L. Ruttan, 2004c). Through a process of critical analysis, conducted in a professionally accepted format, the historian reviews the historical data and critically interprets the material. However, significant for Indigenous histories, even when a critical view is adopted, this literate approach to history remains based in the power of the written word or the critical interpretation of that discourse. Additionally, Western accounts of history have become increasingly mathematicized in an attempt to further an unbiased, objective, and empirical validity. This drive towards quantification has been criticized by third and fourth world scholars in light of the colonial context where Indigenous people were counted, measured, and contained (Appadurai, 1996; Kalpagam, 2000).

These processes resulted in versions of history, that despite the challenges of Indigenous scholars, have as yet to be "decolonized" (Henderson, 2000a) by presenting them in the context of lived narratives. This issue is also relevant to the validation of oral history in the Foucaultian context of documents as monuments maintained in systems of power (Foucault, 1972). Thus the history of Indigenous people has been contained and maintained within Western institutions (archives and universities) of knowledge verification (L.T. Smith, 1999).

Western historians have focused on the diffusion of Europeans and European thought throughout North America. This phenomenon in Canada occurred in response to the drive for new resources in support of European economic growth (Blaut, 1992; Innis, 1927/1999). This process has been seen ideologically as inevitable based on the presumed superiority of European society, values, and economic processes (Blaut, 1992; Said, 1993) and by government furthering what Blaut refers to as tunnel vision or a tunnel history (Blaut, 1992). Criticized as notable for its absence is either "her story" or "their story" particularly as told by women and members of non-European groups *themselves* (Amin, 1989; Harding, 1986; Merchant, 1986; Mihesuah, 1998; L. Smith, 1999).

In the context of colonial relations, including those of internal colonization (Blauner, 1969; Churchill, 1998; Marquard, 1957; Thomas, 1966a, van den Berghe, 1984), this sense of history as power has been described as especially potent (Adams, 1989; Fanon, 1967; Said, 1993, Thomas, 1966a, 1966b). From this perspective, history is seen to belong to the colonizers. Said (1994, p. 99) reminds us of the role of European literature and written history in defining and representing the non-European world in order "to be able to see it, to master it, and above all to hold it." This same process, which Said (1979) terms *orientalism*, has occurred in the romanticized vision of land, people, and history produced in Western literature describing the "lure of the north." One has only to look at the names on a map or at the titles in the "northern history" section of any library to see the evidence of this process. Thus, history, by serving to mythologize, interpret, and quantify our past beliefs and actions, has allowed individuals, groups, and states to use the authority of the historical voice and its texts to justify both past and present behavior and attitudes. This is as true in the Canadian North as elsewhere.

Aboriginal Conceptions of History

Many Aboriginal peoples held/hold a sense of history as an ongoing part of life. Past, present, and future may be seen as intertwined and undifferentiated (Armstrong, 1995; DeLoria, 1999; Little Bear, 1994). From this perspective any single moment is connected to all other moments and can only be understood as such (Little Bear, 1994; Ridington, 1988). For history, then, to be connected to future in ways that are good, acts that serve to balance and center past and present must be carried out (Allen, 1987); not doing so has its own consequences. Thus, a good life for future generations was not necessarily seen as requiring progress but rather continuity and balance of values across time. As many Aboriginal Elders remind us, a good life is then led "the best way one knows how" and is similar to that of one's grandparents as well as connected to their lives (Allen, 1987; Momaday, 1966/1999; Paulette, 1992; Ridington, 1988).

Smith's Landing First Nations leader, Francois Paulette, described this process in oral testimony given at the Treaty 8 tax case (Benoit case) heard in Federal court in Edmonton, Alberta in May of 2001. The transmission of knowledge of Treaty 8 comes from his grandfather, a headman present at the treaty signing, through his father to himself. Thus as Francois Paulette (2001) noted in his testimony before the Federal Court:

> History flows from the family. History flows by the bloodline and through it the treaty and knowledge of it is still there. It is like any other thing in our history, our way of knowledge. It is like if someone wants to learn Indian medicine from an Elder. He tells the Elder, "I want to possess medicine." The Elder then looks at his history on each of his parent's side as far back as he can for family involvement in medicine. If he finds that it is represented on both sides of the family there is a good chance the young person will have it too. It is the same way with the transmission of history; of oral history. Oral history is passed down; some people *possess* history, the knowledge of history.

Through this connection the authenticity of his testimony is as valid and current as if his grandfather, Johnny Paulette, were there in the courtroom himself. While this case was won at the Federal Court level, it was lost on appeal, and the Supreme Court of Canada declined to hear the case.

Significant among many Aboriginal peoples is the knowledge that "we have always been here" (Marshall, 1995; Christensen, 1995) or as Dene Elder George Blondin (1990) puts it, "we have been here since the world was new" (p. i). Brian Maracle (1994) observes that the "sacredness of place names, sights, ceremonies, the land itself, these are history, history that is becoming living history once more" (p.10). The nature of this knowledge means that this predominantly narrative history must be told in the right place, in the right time, in the right way, and by the right people. Thus history was not something to be taken lightly or shared in ways that would show disrespect for the value of the Creator's gifts. From a Western perspective history must be based in science, in literacy, and in method while from a traditional Aboriginal perspective history is based in and validated by knowing in connection with land, the relationships of language and oral tradition, and the balancing continuity of a good life

From this experiential basis, history may be known by not only being on the land but by living a life that allows one to be open to what the land has to tell and by understanding it from within worldview . Language then connects that relationship with land (Kinew, 1998; Little Bear, 1998) For example, Kinew (2001) describes the very sounds that make up the elements of the language itself as being based in the sounds of the land as it speaks to the listening human. Therefore land, language, and self are said to be connected in ways that allow one to see oneself as: as old as the earth itself, as inseparable from earth (Allen, 1993; Hogan, 1993), as caretakers of the stories and language of the earth (Caduto & Bruchac, 1991; Hogan, 1993), and, thus, as inseparable from history (Armstrong, 1995; Trask, 1999).

In some cases, stories associated with the names of landscape features are understood to hold history within them (Andrews et al, 1998; K. Basso, 1984, 1996). Particular places or aspects of landscape may be essentially "inhabited" with history (K.Basso, 1984, 1996; Harkin, 2000; Paulette, 2000).This brings belief that lost historical knowledge may "come back" by interacting in the locality or conditions where particular knowledge is located (Blondin, 1997; Cruikshank, 1990; Maracle, 1994, Paulette, 2000). However, this is also a cause for concern as we see in the frequent destruction of many of these sites through resource development activity (Churchill, 1999; Momaday, 1997). Barriers to access to what is now private land or land shared in common with non-Aboriginal users with its usage regulated by Canadian institutions also serve as impediments to traditional use (Snow, 1978).

Additionally, Aboriginal scholars remind us of how a circular rather than linear approach to history, based in responsiveness to a North American ecology, leads not only to differing perspectives for the embodiment of historical knowledge but also to the use of differing methods (Churchill, 1999; Deloria, 1999; Fixico, 1998; Little Bear, 1994; Miheusah, 1998). Most importantly: "the Western preoccupation with history and a chronological description of reality was not a dominant factor in any tribal conception of either time or history" (Deloria, 1999, p. 290). Rather "the story itself is important, not its precise chronological location" (p. 290). Nor is the relative validity of the narrative as compared to other narratives important. What is important is the experiencing of the language itself (Armstrong, 1995), of the use of each word in that particular narrative in the context of the particular interaction of storyteller and listener (Cruikshank, 1990, 1995; Little Bear, 2000; Momaday, 1997). Through a process of both repetition and emphasis on the variation relevant to the needs of the listener, history as story was used to guide the social, emotional, physical and spiritual development of children and youth (Eastman, 1972; Cruikshank, 1990, 1995, 1999a; Johnston, 1995, 1999; Momaday, 1997).

In North American oral traditions there are narrative histories about beginnings, about flood, and about retreat from cold (Blondin, 1990, 1997; Deloria, 1999; Government of the NWT, 1976). There are narratives about the events involved in interaction with other nations and also narratives of how people gained or were given essential knowledge or assistance from land and animals or other than human beings (Erdoes & Ortiz, 1998; Caduto & Bruchac, 1991; Eastman, 1972; Hallowell, 1942, 1960, 1992; Johnston, 1976, 1999; Momaday, 1997; Norman, 1987; Sharp, 1987, 2001; D. M. Smith, 1997, 2002; T. Smith, 1995). Many narrative accounts emphasized both the admirable and less admirable qualities of human and animal behavior. Often told in a humorous fashion, these stories were common and through their illustration helped the listener learn to behave, understand or know in appropriate ways (Caduto & Bruchac, 1991; Deloria, 1999; Eastman, 1972; Government of the NWT, 1976; Johnston, 1999; Momaday, 1997; Norman, 1987; Toelken, 1987). Often these stories held other levels of meaning and reference that were associated with history and future in relationship to particular needs at particular times (Toelken, 1987).

Narratives also reflect issues important in the life history of men and women (Cruikshank, 1990, 1995). Therefore they provide us not most essentially with the facts of history as we usually regard them but rather with the cyclical pattern and context of social history and of culturally appropriate strategies for resolving common dilemmas faced by men and women (Cruikshank, 1995). In these narrative histories, although there are often tricksters that help humans face personal and interpersonal difficulties (Blondin, 1990; Cruikshank & Sidney, 1994; Erdoes & Ortiz, 1998; Norman, 1987; Stevens, 1971; Vizenor, 1989) the Western sense of history as justification or as useful in controlling others is foreign (Deloria, 1999). Rather, what has been emphasized is the inherent power of the story itself, the proper form or format of the story, the respect for and the relationship one has with the storyteller, and with the environment from which the knowledge embodied/held in the story is rooted. History in terms of causality is only relevant then when something individually or within the group is perceived as out of balance. However, even then it is less important to know what caused the imbalance rather than what type of imbalance exists and what the appropriate response entails.

These “differences” have been an object of study by many Western scholars. However, a significant amount of the extensive base of historical research regarding Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal interaction has been criticized by Aboriginal scholars for misrepresenting itself as Indian history. These scholars remind us, in fact, that what is being portrayed is rather the history of European or Euro-North American interaction with Indian peoples as told from a Western perspective, however sensitively or however biased that telling may be (Churchill, 1998; Deloria, 1999; Fixico, 1998; Miheusah, 1998; L. T. Smith, 1999). Fixico (1998) recommends that any Indian history must take place from within an Indian perspective in the context of not only culture but also community, metaphysics, and environment. Thus the historian, in order to begin to deal ethically with the question of "history for whom" must place his/her emphasis on where the people put theirs (Martin, 1987; Ridington, 1987). For example, while the people may remember events which the researcher thinks are highly significant what is important is, rather, what the people think is significant (Martin, 1987). Ridington (1987) based on his experience with the Dunne-Za (Beaver), of northwestern Alberta and northeastern British Columbia, suggests that the "true history of these people will have to be written in a mythic language" (p. 135) by which he means within the Dunne-Za spiritual worldview and not that of the researcher.

Additionally, as Sahlins (1981) points out in his work on the Hawaiian response to Captain Cook, to portray an accurate history, that history must be understood from within the cultural metaphors of that people. History, then, is not simply objective and the interpretation of historical behavior is not simply based on rational choice but can be used as a contextually based organizing force or "structure of significance" (Sahlins, 1981, p. 8). For example, the Métis "rebellion" of 1885 is not only an historical event with contested interpretations; it is despite the ensuing diaspora, a foundational event in the formation of Métis identity. What is important, then, is not that events can be ordered culturally but "how, in that process culture is reordered" (Sahlins, 1981, p. 8). Further, Wolf (1999) reminds us that to fully understand we must take account of the impact of ideologies of power, the mechanisms of power, and particularly of the ramifications of the use of power in particular relationships and contexts. It is this power that either guarantees or fails to shore up Sahlins' culturally empowered structures of significance. Thus the Métis sash today is a symbol of power and pride that redefines how one sees oneself. Yet, the sash, however meaningful, is also backed up by the political and cultural will of Métis organizations. At the same time the continued containment (i.e. in museums, private collections) of sacred objects such as medicine bundles which embody and hold history (Johnsrude, 2001) connotes continued efforts to control ("on behalf of") and understand Aboriginal knowledge from within Western models.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), reflecting on the work of Fanon (1967) and Nandy (1983), describes the fragmentary effect that the Western approach to history and the resulting belittling of Indigenous approaches as myths has had on Indigenous people's world wide. As a result, "disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, their languages, their social relationships and their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world" (p. 28). Winona Stevenson (1998) states: "by focusing on the historical remnants left by one side of that relationship, historians reinforce the colonialist notion that Western historical canons and conventions are superior" (p.25). Thus the aim is to tell what Bonita Lawrence (2002) refers to as a "fuller history" focused on real people in real places, histories as experienced on and with the land.

Discussion/Significance

What then is the point of this brief discussion? It is not the simplistic answer that Western approaches are simply wrong headed. It is that the relative weight or uses of history as a value in society, as culturally based, as an ideological construct, and as a hegemonic process based in the European tradition is vastly different from the perspective held by many Aboriginal North Americans. Further that "difference" has had and continues to have profound implications for our economic, social, and political relations with each other. This is important not only in understanding the settlement period but also in the continued debate regarding explanations for European geographic and intellectual diffusion and perhaps even more importantly to the debate regarding the causality and implications of current economic, social, and political status of Indigenous peoples within Western states. Yet at the same time, as Sahlins (1993) has pointed out, explanations based in colonialism and world systems, as essential as they are, must also not become reified themselves in ways that negate agency and immortalize cultures in fixed and immutable images.

The Aboriginal Elders in this study present a range of responses to Western institutions and Western notions of historical experience. They offer personally, culturally, and ecologically located definitions of history, knowledge, and environment. Their perspectives are fundamental to my understanding of the issues presented by the research question. Personal narrative accounts such as these vary a great deal from the policy documents, government reports, and historical accounts of travelers and traders. These accounts are not often heard. When the voices of the official and historical accounts are heard above those of the people involved, the impact on succeeding generations can be and in the context of Aboriginal history has been extreme. The nature of these experiences often continues to influence successive generations, the community as a whole, and the strategies used by current community members to relate to institutions including schools, health systems, and government renewable resource programs. It is my argument that gathering these experiential and culturally based perceptions is a necessary first step in acknowledging the strengths and agency of Ft. Smith community members, while also accounting for the impact of internal and external events of the twentieth century. Previous efforts aimed at addressing issues of concern in Ft. Smith have started with frameworks for analysis and change that come from outside the community and bring with them assumptions that are often inappropriate and unhelpful. I argue that any effort at addressing the concerns of the people themselves must be conducted in a manner that re-cognizes while acknowledging realities from within including those that are difficult to address. Such an approach is required as an initial foundational stage to any other further research or policy development.

The need for this, in essence, peoples' history told from within world-view has been called for not only in Ft. Smith, but also by Indigenous scholars throughout the world (Alfred, 1999; Battiste, 2000a, 2000b; Fixico, 1998, Henderson, 2000b; Laenui, 2000; Lawrence, 2002; Roberts & Wills, 1998; L. T. Smith, 1999). They note the one-sidedness of earlier academic accounts (Churchill, 1998; Deloria, 1999; L.T. Smith, 1999; Miheusah, 2004). Additionally, the nature of Canadian colonialism in supporting notions of a kinder, gentler settlement and as a result suppressing or distorting Aboriginal experience and histories has been called into question (Adams, 1989, Alfred, 1999; Lawrence, 2002, Venne, 1997). Errors based in cultural bias have been common and have increasingly been critiqued as such, particularly in historical and anthropological accounts (Churchill, 1998; Deloria, 1999; Fixico, 1998; Miheusah, 1998; Sioui, 1992, Stevenson, 1998). For example, Stevenson (1998) describes blinders often exhibited by historians as related to their reliance on a culturally specific conceptual model which emphasizes precision in form, chronology, and testable results; this model remains embedded in culturally specific values regarding objectivity and truth. She challenges historians to widen and authenticate their view by getting out of the archives and into the community. Given Dirks' (2002) critique that archives, particularly in postcolonial contexts, serve a sedimentary and monumentalizing function for the state this call to get out in the community is particularly cogent.

I argue then that a culturally based understanding of local history as experienced by residents and communicated in oral narratives of story and relationship is required in order to understand current community relationships and institutions. The differing visions of what that past entails, who holds knowledge, the forms of transmission, and the means of determining truth, as held by particular sections of the community, need to be understood as such. These issues hold meaning that influences current interactions. I also expect to contribute to theory development as follows:

1. To explore how individual experience and perception as situated within a cultural interpretation of historical context, results in strategies for response given the accompanying social, political, and economic factors,
2. Through the development of an ecological picture of social and political history in interaction with culture, cognitive traditions, and knowledge systems and to begin to explore the resilience of such.

This chapter has described the starting point, research questions, and supporting literature for this study. The following chapters address the methodology, data, methods of analysis, and conclusions of this study. As is expected in ethnographic research this study with its iterative series of experiences and dynamic processes of analysis shows movement. Drift in the service of responsiveness to research experience, relationships, and data is inevitable in this form of research. Basic propositions following the initial development of this study were as follows:

Thesis Propositions

1. *Western accounts and local Aboriginal accounts of what makes for history differ in significant ways.*

2. *Local accounts are embodied in the storied lives of local First Nations and Métis peoples as illustrated in this discussion.*

3. *Non-Aboriginal community members and officials have operated from within their own normative positions and narrative frames regarding the nature of history, identity, and community institutions and assumed outward control from this position.*

4. *Nevertheless, Aboriginal peoples reacted with strategies that maximize their own histories and own choices within their own knowledge traditions and institutions.*

5. *Over the years these strategies based in local knowledge systems applied to and as influenced by structures of power located within Western institutions and knowledge systems have proven both adaptive and resilient. At the same time, given the political and legal context, destructive social and health outcomes have also been experienced.*

CHAPTER TWO, METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the traditions of research that inform this inquiry, the ethical challenges involved, and the limitations to research. An ethnographic and narrative approach to methodology responsive to the critique of research and research ethics presented from within the framework of Indigenous methodology (S. Wilson, 2003) is used. This study is situated within the tradition of qualitative research. Qualitative research is appropriate to address questions regarding how people interact and handle their daily lives within temporal, social, and historical contexts (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002; Morse & Field, 1995). The rich description typically produced enables us to more thoroughly understand experience as perceived and understood by research participants and within research settings. Responsiveness to the further elaboration of research questions in process, as information emerges, is also an aspect of good qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Ethnographic studies investigate the culturally based understanding of, or response to, a phenomena or phenomenon through the process of engaged field work in location. Ethnographers typically rely on a mixture of observational and interview data resulting in a holistic description of people and place within a cultural context and in relation to the research focus (Wolcott, 1999).

Given the research setting, I have worked towards methodological coherence by trying to match assumptions to methodology to worldview. In this case a highly interactive approach to participation as other ethnographers (Cruikshank, 1990; Goulet, 1998; Ridington, 1988, 1990; D.M. Smith, 1973, 1998 and Sharp, 2001) have used with regional subarctic groups was followed. This meant that personal learning from experience within the cultural context influenced both the methodological and the theoretical understanding. I have also taken a somewhat novel approach to methodology and analysis. I hold that the interview material, the stories, and the results of the study can not be authentically represented or understood without placing them in context; moreover, removing them too far from a contextual discussion would be potentially destructive. In order to underline the importance of context a greater than usual amount of direct quotation is used in this text. That does not mean I have not reduced and summarized material, but I have tried to keep much of the material within the cultural conventions and relational context of the original. This is also due to the reality that I cannot answer the questions asked by the research better than the people can themselves.

Based in fieldwork that, while not simply random, is typically non-linear, flexible, and responsive (Ervin, 2000) ethnography is increasingly reflexive (Davies, 1999). This reflexivity situates the researcher and explores the challenges and opportunities central to the human to human interaction and environmental context inherent in "doing" ethnography (Agar, 1999). Currently, given an increased focus on the socio-political and ethical frames of research, the ethics of power, relationship, and ownership of knowledge are stressed both in the "collection" of "data" and the completion of "text" (Agar, 1996). What is then presented is not object or text as *fait accompli*, but is, rather, based in the process of connecting experience and thought in interaction with members of the community and as then realized in the reader's own response (Clifford, 1988; Strathern, 1991).

An historical approach to culturally based questions has been used in this study. A range of approaches to working with questions that involve both historical and anthropological questions have been developed (Brettell, 1998). One aim is for a more complete record by balancing oral data and textual data in such a way that their interaction is elucidated and by examining this material dialogically a more complete record is produced. A second aim in presenting both oral and textual material is "to access different voices and different interpretations of the same historical experiences" (Brettel, 1998, p. 528). Ethnohistory is an approach that attempt to address these issues by renegotiating the privileging of texts. In 1960 the American Society for Ethnohistory defined ethnohistory as "the use of historical and ethnological methods and materials to gain knowledge of the nature and causes of change in a culture defined by ethnological concepts and categories" (Axtell, 1981, p. 5). The focus of ethnohistory has primarily been on the study of Native culture change since the time of European contact. Its methodology includes the use of "documentary evidence and oral traditions to study changes in non-literate societies from about the time of earliest European contact" (Trigger, 1982, p. 2). I hold, however, that ethnohistory, sited primarily in Western constructs, does not go far enough to respond to the questions addressed in this research.

An historical approach to ethnography has been increasingly common in the field of anthropology (Brettell, 1998, Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Ortner, 1994). As Michael Agar notes:

> now ethnography considers the political and personal circumstances of the research, views the local group as a diverse crowd in a world of blurred edges, and foregrounds how larger historical currents fill the study with life." (Agar, 1996, p.6-7)

Thus by acknowledging both the individual within the cultural pattern and the cultural pattern within the individual we can see the unique ways people adapt culture to contexts of changing personal, political, and societal change (Agar, 1996). In this context, richness is insufficient on its own; work must be located within a globalized and political context as never before (Appadurai, 1996). In subarctic ethnography this concept is not entirely new. As Hallowell (1992) noted, speaking of his work with the Ojibwa (Anishnaabe) in the 1930s, an historical approach based on the accounts of the people is important.

> As more and more radical political, economic, social, and cultural changes sweep the world, a historical framework for ethnographic description and analysis is more than ever necessary. This is particularly the case when dealing with the Indians of the northern coniferous forest region of Canada, whose destiny has involved them so inextricably with the fur trade and the history of the Dominion itself. (p. 3)

Sahlins (1993) notes the value of history to ethnography in order to: "synthesize form and function, structure and variation, as a meaningful cultural process, sequitur to a specific cultural order rather than an eternal practical logic" (p. 11). At the same time, Comaraff and Comaroff (1992) call for an historical anthropology whose focus is on "the processes that make and transform particular worlds" (p. 31) in a reciprocal, complex and interactive fashion. Significant for this study is the approach to historical context taken by Julie Cruikshank, who attempts to bridge the world as her Aboriginal research partners see it, as society constructs it, and as anthropology explores it. She counters the stories of the glories of the Klondike Gold Rush with those of resilience and agency shared in oral history with each presenting its own windows on culturally based narratives (Cruikshank, 1992a, 2003). Cruikshank (2003), however, describes the challenge presented as being:

> less one of straightening out facts than of identifying how such cognitive models may generate different kinds of social analysis, leading to different interpretations of a given event, one of which is included in official history while the other is relegated to collective memory. (p. 438)

This perspective presents interesting issues for the analysis of this study.

Sources of Data/ Data Collection

Ethnography typically relies on a range of methods in order to produce a more holistic work. Included in this study were:

1. participant-observation with the emphasis on participation,
2. oral history interviews with Elders,
3. interviews with knowledgeable community leaders,
4. the involvement of community research advisors,
5. the use of secondary interview data from previous studies and
6. historical and ethnographic literature review.

By using a variety of methods as appropriate to the question, the triangulation advised by Western academics (Morse & Field, 1995; Bernard, 1995; Risjord et al, 2001) was achieved. This process also matched that of community advisor Raymond Beaver who indicated "if you hear it in three places it's probably true." Thus the multiple nature of the data gathering activities carried out in this study are likely to enhance the authenticity, validity, and value of conclusions given the always partial nature of results based in varying world-views (Agar, 1996). The table below illustrates sources of data used in response to research questions.

Table 1

Data Sources/Research question

Research Questions	Data Sources and Methods	Justification
1. How do community perspectives on history compare with Western perspectives?	Written accounts of explorers, traders, missionaries, government officials and academics	To explore how Western accounts portray community and what influence that has had.
	Local newspaper and grey literature	To explore perceptions of local journalists on community events/ community members.
	Oral interviews - primary and secondary sources	To explore oral history/ lived experience of the same events and to explore what local residents stress as important.
	Photographs - archival and personal collections	Provides visual images of time and place and of what is important to the taker and/or holder of photograph.
2. What is the process of interpretation used by the Elders?	Oral interviews	To discover what is of importance to Elders and how they present it.
	Key informant interviews and collaboration	To gain information on community dynamics and assist in analysis.
	Participant observation	To observe and participate in community interaction as it occurs.
	Work of other anthropologists working with subarctic peoples	To gain awareness of work on Elders knowledge systems in related Dene and Métis communities.
3. What impact did their interpretation have on the strategies used by Elders and their families to interact with programs and policies introduced within and beyond the community	Oral interviews-primary and secondary	To discover what strategies were presented and how they were viewed.
	Participant observation	To observe discussion of these issues and their impact in the community today.
	Key informants	To assist me in exploring interpretations.

Participating and observing

Darnell (2000) holds that: “the anthropological method of participant-observation fieldwork works in any community” where “there is a network of known persons whose interaction constitutes a local manifestation of ‘the culture,’ exoticism removed” (p. 170). Mason (1996) considers participant-observation particularly appropriate for research involving an ontological question regarding the way people interact, understand, and respond to these interactions. Particpant-observation methods are based in an epistemological position that respects the knowledge to be found through experience (Mason, 1996). A highly interactive approach to research is stressed by most subarctic ethnographers, as is the emphasis on truth and knowledge as an outcome of experience (Cruikshank, 1990; Goulet, 1998; Guedon, 1994; Ridington, 1988, 1990; Rushforth, 1992; Scollon & Scollon, 1979; D.M. Smith, 2002 and Sharp, 2001). For example, Goulet (1998) notes that, "among the Dene the investigator's willingness to learn experientially and to observe quietly people's non-verbal behavior are the prerequisites in an ethnography of the Dene way of living and doing things" (p. xxxi). Ethnographers, then, are expected to learn experientially, as the people do (Goulet, 1998). From a Dene perspective, and I would add from a northern or Woodlands Cree perspective, true knowledge is seen as personal knowledge; respect for autonomy in learning is assumed, as is the belief that only by experiencing, doing, will you know "a little bit" (Goulet, 1998; Ridington, 1988, 1990, D.M. Smith, 2002). As Goulet (1998) points out, these processes influence how the ethnographer participates, observes, and learns or is taught in context.

In his work with the Dene Tha (Slavey) in northern Alberta, Goulet (1998) suggests that a form of radical participation based on the work of Barth (1992), V. Turner (1985, 1986), and Jackson (1989) is most appropriate given the learning styles of the people. Jackson (1996) holds that in this form, that of radical participation or radical empiricism, "inquiry ceases to be simply a matter of controlled experimentation, cool observation, and disinterested data-gathering, because the anthropologist her or himself is drawn into the life world as a participant" (p. 29). In the context of this study, given the multiple-nature of my relationships within the community, I could do no other than proceed with this framework in mind. At the same time, keeping field notes served to ground participation in observation and purpose (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000).

Settings/contexts

During the course of research I spent a series of research periods in Ft. Smith, a community in which I had lived steadily for the fifteen years before I returned to school. During the following six years of doctoral work, I spent six weeks in Ft. Smith every summer, and also Christmas and other holidays were spent there. In the fall of 2003 I spent an additional month in the community continuing the interview process begun in the late summer. While most of the interviews were completed by the end of the Christmas holidays of 2003 conversations with participants about the interview content took place in trips north in February and July of 2004.

Through personal friendships I remained connected to people from Ft. Smith while in Edmonton. This involved not only phone calls and e-mail but also through social contacts with friends from Ft. Smith now living in Edmonton or visiting the city. A close friend from Ft. Smith, Edna Beaver, was a house-mate for a nine-month period during which we often discussed issues brought up in the work. One of the interviewees, Frank Laviolette, was hospitalized for surgery in Edmonton in the early fall of 2003 and I visited him and his family there frequently. I also participated in sweat lodge and fasting along with the Paulette family both in Ft. Smith and at a reserve in Saskatchewan. I attended several funerals in Ft. Smith and two funerals of relatives of the Beaver family on the Bigstone Cree Reserve in northern Alberta. Thus a radical form of participant observation in line with Goulet's (1998) description, learning, and opportunity for discussion of the research took place both in Ft. Smith and in Edmonton.

While in Ft. Smith I participated in the daily activities involved in running a household and parenting my children. The activities of daily living, including grocery shopping, going to the doctor, using the library, watching my boys' swimming lessons along with other parents, attending Christmas events and community feasts and picnics were all part of participatory-observation. These contacts often resulted in discussions with community members about my work, comments on the value of the work, and recommendations regarding people to interview.

Activities involving Elderly community members, including social visiting, attending community-wide social activities organized for seniors, and doing my shopping on seniors' day (10% off at all stores) provided opportunities to chat. I also spent a considerable amount of time visiting with residents at the Northern Lights Chronic Care Home where an old friend, Maria Brown, was living following a stroke. She and other Elderly residents, whose conditions allowed, enjoyed sitting outside the home telling stories, recalling memories of events and people, pointing out where different buildings used to be, and commenting on the people coming and going on the street below. This proved a rich source of information and context and was something I enjoyed doing.

The personal relationships developed during the research period involved me in extended family activities, connecting me with the Aboriginal community in a new way. This broadened my involvement in the community and my opportunity for learning significantly. In light of local political dynamics, however, being more closely connected with a particular family also limited some opportunities. It also, and significantly, made Raymond Beaver, originally a research advisor, even more of a partner in the research, and gave me (and him) a sounding board for discussing ideas. When attending community activities I went as someone connected in a new way, as the partner of a family member or of a First Nations leader who often elicited strong reactions one way or the other.

Discussion of social and political events is common in Ft. Smith, providing a current perspective on some of the historical issues that affect the community. Politics and talk about those running for office and how campaigns and elections are conducted is a dominant form of discourse in this community. I was present for several highly charged First Nations and town elections. Political dynamics in the community affected both my work on this project and my personal life in many ways. Due to my personal relationship with Raymond Beaver, a middle-aged Cree leader who was a band councilor, former chief, ousted leader, and then chief again during the course of this research, how I was viewed was influenced by local politics. One result was a nine-month period where I was unable to get my research license renewed or to continue direct research activity. While frustrating at the time, much was learned related to the research question by this experience.

I attended local and regional meetings of Aboriginal organizations when possible. Particularly significant were: a ceremony held in Ft. Fitzgerald for the signing of the Agreement in Principle between the federal government and the Smith's Landing First Nation, an annual general assembly for the Akaitcho Territory Treaty 8 Tribal Council which included meetings and cultural events, an Elders gathering and cultural events for the Métis Nation of the Northwest Territories, public information meetings regarding land claims settlement, and the signing ceremony for the Salt River TLE (Treaty Land Entitlement) claim where the then Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Robert Nault, was present. Community-wide feasts, picnics, music events, and fish fries were attended. Held throughout the year, and sponsored by the town and other organizations, these events often take place in conjunction with holidays such as Canada Day or the August long weekend. Community leaders from both the town and Aboriginal governments typically work the line at these events, cooking and serving the people. An outdoor music festival and crafts workshop is held every August and is well attended. Parks Canada puts on a picnic with family activities at Pine Lake in July which I also attended. Another interesting event is the late summer picnic and fly-by where water bombers, stationed in the community all summer, fly low along the river embankment, dropping their loads, mist settling on the viewers, as a form of goodbye. This event is attended mainly by Aboriginal community members, many of whom have had a long-term relationship with the owner of this company and with fire fighting activities.

Clifford (1988) views participant observation as necessary to the "dialectic of experience and interpretation" (p. 34). Reactions to these events, as experienced and as reflected on, were recorded in field notes. Having friends/advisors with which I could openly explore my missteps, misunderstandings and beginning vision was invaluable. Their willingness to share reactions to events and to my behavior as an aspect of experience was immensely helpful.

Participants: The sample

Ethnographic interviews were conducted under the assumption that the frames of reference used and the personal and culturally based meanings involved in the material presented (Fontana & Frey, 1994) would provide a rich source of information to reflect on both individually and with participants and advisors. Six Aboriginal community members ranging from sixty-eight to eighty-six years of age were interviewed from three to six times each. I chose to interview people who were recommended from within the community as being knowledgeable and whom I knew and had some connection to, as culturally appropriate, but with whom I did not have an ongoing personal relationship prior to this process. Sample selection was thus a result of a relational snowball process as appropriate in Aboriginal research contexts (Calliou, 2004). Information from several other Elders who I knew personally beforehand, informs my understanding but they were not interviewed formally.

Of the six interview participants, three were male and three were female. Two of them describe themselves as Chipewyan, three as Métis and one as Cree. Three of the participants speak Cree as a first language, one Chipewyan, another Chipewyan and English and the last French/Michif. All interviews were conducted in English, which all participants used on a regular basis given their school and work history in the community. However, several of them preferred the use of their first language when alone with age-mates from their own language group; most spoke French and some of them knew Aboriginal languages other than their own. They represent what Scollon and Scollon (1979) have referred to as a pattern of linguistic convergence formerly common in the region. In many instances, the structures of the Aboriginal languages and/or French could be seen in the transcription of dialogue in terms of the use of personal pronouns, grammar, or place order of words. Four of the interview participants were recorded but two Elders preferred that I just take notes. All of the interviews were either transcribed or notes written up in interview format. All of the interviews were listened to and read many times during the process of transcribing and working at coming to understanding. In most cases, questions that arose from earlier interviews were reviewed with the participants and corrections made if needed.

The research sample was very small, despite my original intention to interview a larger group. This occurred for a variety of reasons including that of opportunity given political, travel, and time factors. The number of interviews held with each participant was based on the availability and interest of the participants as well as my travel schedule. Importantly, I had been advised by community advisors that a smaller number would give me more as each Elder knew so much. Raymond Beaver from the Salt River First Nation indicated, “It’ll be better for you and for us if you get a lot from a few Elders rather than just a little from more Elders.” As I began to work with these Elders I saw that this was the case and that participant observation and informal discussion would serve to supplement and contextualize the interview material. All participants were in support of the project and several of them had their own ideas regarding not only how they could participate in the research but how I could help *them* in accomplishing their own goals along the same lines. Thus they were active participants. The Elder I interviewed the most frequently was motivated by poor health and the desire to share what he needed to in case he was not to live much longer, which unfortunately proved to be the case

Protocol

Either tobacco in the form of loose tobacco or cigarettes and/or a small gift, (University of Alberta coffee mugs, tea towels, or booklets on Aboriginal Elders) were given to each interview participant as recommended by local advisors and other researchers (Calliou, 2004; Struthers, 2001). As Michell (1999) notes, as part of the protocol of Woodland Cree and other nations "the practice of offering Tobacco in exchange for stories and ways of pursuing knowledge and truth" (p.1) has an age-old history. Carrying out this protocol places the "ethic of reciprocity" within an accepted framework of mutuality and respect. By offering something you are framing your request for assistance in a respectful way; by accepting the gift the participant is understood to indicate the intention to assist (Michell, 1999). The interviewer, by offering something, is also making a commitment to carry out what was agreed on, in this case telling, in written form, the stories the participants wanted told. More than one participant wondered why a consent form was needed when they had already taken the tobacco offered. Consent was nevertheless re-confirmed, as required by the University, by using written consent forms or orally recorded or dictated consent statements, as the respondents preferred.

Reciprocity was also reflected in acts of relationship including hospital visits, giving rides, baking, or making copies of photos of relatives found in archives. All of the interviewees indicated that they wished that their own names be used in this report in recognition of their knowledge. Doing so acknowledges an oral approach to history that reverses the disempowering silencing of names, faces, personalities and power. It also reflects processes of validation of truth through reference to names, relationships, locations, and experiences as used by the participants in their own accounts.

Interview format and process

The interviews conducted with Elders as part of this research used an unstructured interview format. During the course of the research I was given access to or located close to thirty secondary sources of interview data dating from the same time period as my research to interviews completed over twenty-five years earlier (Dolan, 1993; Métis Nation, 1977; Muldaver, 1993; Cree Language Program, 2003). What was striking to me was the difference in the kind of material elicited, even when addressing similar historical topics, when using a format of structured or even semi-structured interview questions, as most of the secondary sources had, as opposed to using the open-ended, respondent-centered, and unstructured interview approach I took (Bernard, 1995; Mishler, 1986). As Davies (1999) puts it, in carrying out unstructured interviews the ethnographer "direct[s] the conversation with the research in mind, without imposing much structure on the interaction" (p. 94). All of the interviews were preceded by informal visits to chat, get better acquainted, confirm interest, and set up a time for a more formally recorded interview. I found that at the base of good information was openness to a developing relationship. This involved not only the participants sharing who they were but opening the door for them to ask me to do the same if they wished. It was important to many of the Elders to know who I was, who my relationships were with, and something about my personal life. They were not simply curious about me but needed to place me as someone with particular types of life experiences and relationships before beginning our work together. At the same time, they understood what the interviews were about and how it met their own interests. All of them had been interviewed before by journalists, by Aboriginal organizations in the context of land use mapping projects, and some of them by academic researchers interested in natural resource issues.

After a general introductory statement about the research purpose I tried to let the interviewee lead, stressing that what I wanted was not simply information but their perspective, what *they* thought was important. Bernard (1995) suggests the general rule for the unstructured interview form is, "Get an informant on to a topic of interest and get out of the way. Let the informant provide what he or she thinks is important" (p. 212). In this format multiple interviews with a smaller number of participants are common and richness of detail emerges over time. Therefore, I tried not to interrupt during the interviews but would ask occasional clarifying questions. Thirty years of experience in interview settings as a counselor made this a format I was quite comfortable with. Dialogue about the material and responses to it was part of the process that typically occurred at the end of the interviews; often after the tape recorder had been turned off (notes were kept on the nature of these comments). In reviewing the interview data I note my use of grammar, phrasing, and pacing was more consistent with the style of the interviewee than is typical for me. This kind of matching, in this case unconscious, may lead to a synchronicity that makes for rich interview material.

The approach taken was an attempt to reflect Aboriginal teaching and learning protocol (Goulet, 1998). In a cultural context where holism is the preferred method for seeing and knowing, rather than individualism and particularism, an informant-centered approach seemed appropriate. Sioui (1992) describes the value of doing history based in Indigenous values and developing what he terms an *auto history* founded on letting "*them* talk, talk about themselves" (p. 102). Open-ended questions allow for the Elder to speak for themselves without leading the interview, allowing the answers that "are already there" to emerge (Calliou, 2004, p. 82.) Further, Innes (1999) recommends that "by allowing the interviewee to dictate the style of interview, the researcher will increase the possibility of gaining new insights into Aboriginal people and their experiences" (p. 88). Thus I consciously used (or tried to) a less directive approach than the earlier interviews I had available did. Although I did not succeed completely in this, I think the attempt made a difference in the nature and content of the information presented.

Issues of power and voice

Methodology must not only suit the research question but also the relationship between researcher and community. This includes the dynamics of newcomer, ethnicity and the history of the community in regards to these relationships (Weber-Pillwax, 2004; Sarris, 1993). This means, as Hermes (1998) points out, that the methodology evolves as "situated responses" in context and particular relationships within that context. Thus my identity as a non-Aboriginal, middle-aged female, former government employee, counselor, and college instructor with connections to particular families, but not *from* the Aboriginal community needs to be kept in mind. I found the issue of interference due to professional role authority most noticeable with those Elders who had been interviewed the most frequently; initially they expected my behavior to fit into the usual control structure of the standard question and answer format. This seemed to disappear once their first interview got rolling, as they began to talk within their usual discourse style, and as their interest in the topic took over.

The potential of informant-guided interviews to redistribute the usual hierarchical power relationship between interviewers and respondents was what initially interested Mishler (1986). This interview form allow interviews to be respondent guided so we may listen to participants ways of telling — their "voices" — and thus represent the process through which accounts are produced more fully than is usual. In this way Mishler (1986) holds that the interviews and the narratives elicited are an aspect of praxis. Nevertheless, this is easier said than done and ethical issues remain. One needs to be careful not to assume that we are "giving" power or voice when participants autonomously choose participation for their own reasons, nor should one oversimplify the meaning making/interpretation that occurs in processes of interpersonal interaction and analysis.

"Key informants" or rather friends, advisors and collaborators

Many community members contributed to my learning in this process. Three of them, Raymond Beaver (Cree), Eileen Bird Lines (Métis), and Francois Paulette (Chipewyan) — through friendship, guidance, and discussion — would typically be described in earlier ethnographic work as "key informants." As Clifford (1988,) notes, in light of increasingly collaborative work, the term informants is no longer suitable "if it ever was" (p. 51). They may perhaps be better understood as mentors. Francois Paulette was particularly supportive in my personal journey to conduct this research in "the best way I knew how." He was well aware of the colonial dynamics I struggled with and role modeled ways to keep one's feet on the ground while doing so. Raymond Beaver's insight on learning and experiencing cultural processes and his belief in what I was trying to do were invaluable. And Eileen Lines through friendship shared as we both struggled with and discussed the impact of colonial dynamics on our personal lives while going to school as single parents, allowed us both to complete what we were trying to do.

Others who particularly supported the research and who contributed in many ways included Don Aubrey, Edna Beaver, Maggie Beaver, Fred Daniels, Marina Devine, Sandra Dolan, Toni Heron, Ken Hudson, Leslie Leong, Julie Lys, Freda Martselos, Peter Martselos, Jerry Miltenberger, Jerry Paulette, Leslie Paulette, Jim Schaeffer, and Agnes Sutherland. Their reactions to this work will likely vary but it is with great appreciation and respect that I thank each of them. There are many others who offered me ideas about who to interview and who expressed interest in the research, to them also I say *Mahsi Cho*. Any errors in this dissertation are my own.

Secondary data

Interviews from several other sources were used as background material. They include most notably a series of interviews conducted in 1977 by the Métis Heritage Project, several interviews completed by Sandra Dolan in 1993 as part of a history of the Salt River settlement, and videotaped interviews with Cree-speaking Elders conducted by the Cree Language Program in 2003 (Dolan, 1993; Métis Nation, 1977; Cree Language Program, 2003). This material was either available in the public domain or I sought permission from the participants to use the interview material. Copies of several other miscellaneous interviews, diaries, and audiotapes of traditional songs were given to me by the participants or their family members. These all proved useful sources of information. In particular, information from Elders now deceased could be reviewed along with the interviews completed for this study.

The Alberta Provincial Archives were visited in order to review historical photos of the community to provide pictorial frames to the interview material. Additional photographic material was reviewed on the websites of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Museum in Yellowknife, the Glenbow Museum, and the Dene Nation. Looking at old photographs was a common activity, often initiated by interview participants or other community members who knew of my interest.

Finally, several stories involving people from this community were collected by other researchers. For example, David M. Smith's work with Chipewyan residents of nearby (225 km) Ft. Resolution in the 1970s included material related to people who had grown up in Salt River and included reference to former Chief Squirrel (D.M. Smith, 1973) and a Cree "shaky tent" practitioner from the community (Dreidger, 1989). Published community-based collections of oral history and traditional knowledge completed in Ft. Smith (Maldaver, 1993), Ft. Vermillion, Alberta (Fort Vermillion, 1992), and Ft. Resolution, Northwest Territories (Beaulieu et al., 1987) were also very valuable in establishing family histories and in understanding traditional ecological knowledge and historical background.

Field notes

During the active research phase field notes were kept on a regular basis. Field notes included not only what happened but reflection on these events, aspects of personal challenge, and beginnings of analysis. Thus the field notes incorporate early workings of the data. In the early stages of research, I found completing field notes difficult due to dynamics similar to those noted by Lareau (1996). These included boredom, scheduling, effort, desire to be doing rather than writing while in Ft. Smith, and the meaning of writing notes about people and experiences where a variety of interpersonal relationships were involved (Lareau, 1996). In the middle section I became more comfortable with the process, completed notes daily, and enjoyed the opportunity for personal and intellectual processing offered by this activity. Later, perhaps trying to determine when I was at the end given that my relationship with the community is ongoing, field notes become more sporadic.

Some material involving activities with Raymond Beaver or his responses including conversations with myself or others and stories he told are included in the field notes but many more are not. I was conscious of this issue and discussed it with him from the outset, concerned that he might feel used in some fashion. Towards the end of the project, when I asked him again about a story he had told me earlier, he was surprised and disappointed that I hadn't been writing *all* his stories down. He had taken for granted that I would respect what he had to say by doing so, knowing that he was telling me stories in order to assist me, and also aware that I could not remember material the way he could. I was concerned that doing so might indicate disrespect for our personal friendship.

Literature review

This research was highly interdisciplinary in nature. The research question was intentionally broad in order to serve as a base for future issue-oriented research. As discussed, this presented challenges in the analysis stage and also meant a wide range of literature related to the community, its peoples, and history was reviewed. This meant a review of the literature regarding the culture and "historical" experience of Cree, Métis and Chipewyan peoples was carried out in the proposal stage. Additional literature on the fur trade, exploration, missions, treaty, adventurers, and government was reviewed in response to the research questions. Particularly useful was the rich data contributed by others working in the area of subarctic ethnography in Canada. This material revolves around three areas a) cosmology, b) traditional ecological knowledge and forms of transmission and c) the continuing framing of identity and the political implications of that identity for Aboriginal peoples. Research and legal documents on the action of relevant court cases (Benoit, 2002; Mikisew Cree, 2003; Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, 1973, 1977; Powley, 2003) and land claims settlement agreements (TLE Smiths Landing First Nation, TLE Salt River First Nation) as initiated in this area were reviewed, as was, local grey literature produced in government documents and local newspapers and newsletters.

The literature as embodied in place and in experience was also reviewed, or perhaps sampled, as an aspect of preparing the research proposal (see Ruttan, 2004c). This meant a longer period preparing the original proposal was required than is typical. The personal consideration of decolonization and other ethical issues, as discussed in developing Indigenous research models, also contributed to the length of this process

I have chosen to integrate the literature review throughout rather than place it in a separate chapter. Much of the material that might have been included in such a review is included in Chapters 1 and 4. In addition, I have intentionally included the interviews prior to the material in Chapter 4.

Challenges to data analysis

An ethnographic approach relying on interviews and an experiential stance to observation is an appropriate description of the overall research tradition within which I have worked. This brings both opportunity and challenge when it comes to data analysis. Qualitative data collection provides the richness of data so frequently cited as validating meaning (Davies, 1999). It is this "richness" that produces the twinned challenges of a) production of an immense amount of data, and b) data that is also relatively unfocused in the initial stages of research (Davies, 1999). In analytically focusing the data, I found that, given the nature of the material and in light of the research question and context, a reassessment of anticipated analysis procedures was required.

The original analysis was to have followed the qualitative coding and thematic analysis approach recommended in qualitative methodology courses and readings. As is typical in ethnography, aspects of analysis occurred iteratively throughout and are reflected in field notes. However, as I began to code the interviews I began to rethink analytic procedures. I found that while I had a rich source of data, what I had been presented with by interview participants and through experiential learning in response to the research question was a series of interconnected narratives. Breaking them down too far created less, rather than greater, clarity. I was reminded of the caution expressed to me by community research advisors: a holistic response to data was the only approach found coherent and meaningful (Beaver, 2000; Johnson, 1992; Paulette, 2000).

In response, I reviewed qualitative procedures of analysis, rereading materials on coding and thematic construction (Barnard, 1995; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Emerson et al., 1995; Mason, 1996). No matter how much I read, I could not make analysis based on coding work for this research. Issues of worldview in the presentation of the data were challenging given that at least two traditions of knowledge were involved. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest that data be "selected, cut up, fragmented, coded, and categorized" (p. 46) in order to see more clearly. Yet Aboriginal scholars have noted the problematic nature of doing so (Cook-Lynn, 1996;

Deloria, 1999; L.T. Smith, 1999; A. Wilson, 1998). Additionally, Said and others have critiqued the use of Western categorization schemes, pointing out the colonial influences on Western literature and research by doing so (Appadurai, 1996; Kaplagram, 2000; Said, 1993).

Mishler, (in Murray, 2003) in struggling with his own response to interview data, describes a troubling process in which narratives are usually weeded out leaving unconnected pieces of information to be reconnected within a generally Western and positivist informational context. As he describes it:

> Interviewers interrupt respondents' answers and thereby suppress expression of their stories; when they appear, stories go unrecorded because they are viewed as irrelevant to the specific aims of specific questions, and stories that make it through these barriers are discarded at stages of coding and analysis. (p. 101)

It became evident to me was that what I had been given (and experienced) were stories ("all the way down"), that these narratives were based in cultural context and reasoning styles, and that the analysis needed to reflect that. While the stories were told by individuals and reflected experience, whether their own or those of the people before them, they also were told in a culturally based fashion and in culturally based ways of responding to the research question as presented. That is not to say that the narratives were all the same: Métis, Chipewyan, and Cree background, personality, gender, age, individual experience, and economic status all make a difference, as can be seen even in this small, but rich, interview sample. However, the narratives presented were all based in the linkage of experience within interconnected culture and environment. They held importance to the research question that needed to be respected as such. In other words, *the way these narratives were told and what was told was in itself an essential aspect of the answer to the research question.* This finding is not dissimilar to the experience of other subarctic ethnographers (Cruikshank, 1990; Goulet, 1998; Guedon, 1994; Ridington, 1988, 1990; Rushforth, 1992, 1994; D.M. Smith, 2002; Sharp, 2001) or of the presentation of experience in regional oral history accounts (Blondin, 1997; Maldaver, 1993; Paper, 2003).

These issues presented a profound challenge to me. I struggled with differences in the analytical process I was developing in light of what I understood of typical methods for analysis of qualitative and ethnographic data. Eventually, I went ahead with what I had wanted to do from the outset. I wrote an account of each person by describing who they were and presenting some of the stories they shared while also integrating discussion of the material. This allowed me to describe who they were as an aspect of some of the stories they considered important to the question. Carrying out this process allowed for the stories included to serve as points of illustration for later analysis. By following this process some of the major thematic issues represented in the totality of the research would be illustrated, as in a collection of case studies, although in this case of lived experience. With this background as a form of "data display" key points and connections could be illustrated allowing for a discussion of thematic and theoretical perspectives.

This approach respected the need to do sound research while working within what I experienced as two traditions of research. Included would be not only academic frameworks but, as well, those based in an experiential and narrative approach closer to the worldview of the participants (Goulet, 1998; Cruikshank, 1990). Respect for the evolving focus of Indigenous methodology on the social and political realities (L.T. Smith, 1999; A. C. Wilson, 1998; S. Wilson, 2003) of "the literature" (Ruttan, 2004c) would also be taken into account. In this context, Brant-Castellano notes (2004):

> If validating intercultural research and communication seems labour-intensive, time-consuming and expensive, it is because the integrity of knowledge transfer has received too little attention in the past. Aboriginal communities, political organizations and scholars are insisting that the integrity of validity of research cannot be assured by Western methodologies alone. They must be tempered by methodologies that are compatible with Aboriginal methods of investigation and validation. (p.106)

I later found that others working in similar circumstances had also used similar methodological and analytical procedures. Dilemmas of analysis such as I experienced have been described by Mishler (1986) and Riessman (1993), who both eventually chose to work with narratives. For example, Reissman (1993) a sociologist, describes her attempts to work with the material presented by research participants in a study on divorce and gender. The participants continually found ways to go beyond the structure of the interview and to respond with stories. As she "struggled to code them" (p.vi.), Reissman came to recognize the participants' narratives as "essential meaning-making structures" (p. 4) that must be "preserved, not fractured" (p. 4). Mishler (1986) explored the possibility that what he referred to as "informant-guided interviewing" might reduce the gaps between research and research "subject" in ways that led to empowerment. He found that by using this style research participants were more likely to tell the story in the way(s) they wanted to and the listener freed to attend to and respond genuinely in the process of exploration.

In the end I revised the data analysis methodology to include ethnographic analysis as based in narrative and Indigenous methodology. Once I decided to go ahead, I received validation in doing so from a committee member, from reading about the struggles of others, and from community advisors. I was then able to explore this issue with my committee as a whole. Nevertheless, in many ways bound to two masters, I haven't succeeded in fulfilling completely the others' expectations. From an Aboriginal community member's review of one of the chapters on the participants I received the comment, "Not holistic enough," while from a non-Aboriginal academic I was given the advice that there were "too many stories, not enough analysis." While challenges remain, in the context of completing this dissertation I have found doing a little bit in both directions while maintaining respect for both traditions is the best I can do.

Perhaps the best advice is that given by Pomo Elder, Mabel McKay to Greg Sarris (1994a, p. 5) when he was struggling with how to portray her life in an accepted academic format, with a thematic and linear structure. As Mabel said, "Well, theme I don't know nothing about. That's somebody else's rule. You *just do the best way you know how* [italics added]. What you know from me" (p.5). While I had already completed some of the material on the interview participants, seeing Mabel's advice stated so clearly became a turning point for me. Her advice to Greg Sarris was the same as what I had heard so often from Aboriginal Elders, to do things in the "best way you know how." This phrase means much more than doing the best you can. It holds connotations of an integration of spirituality, intention, ability, and learning from experience as the process of seeking balance takes its course. Therefore, I have grounded the analysis in lives and narratives first. From this base I could go on to the task of comparing Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal accounts of what makes for history.

Working with narratives

Historically based ethnographies are couched in the personal history of lived experience, cultural forms of representation, and the political implications of power, story, and ownership of time. Particularly appropriate to the application of "as lived" history to community history is the narrative method. Psychologist Jerome Bruner (1985) has described narrative as one of two primary modes of thought, narrative and paradigmatic, which "differ radically in their procedures for establishing truth" (p. 97). Narrative refers to both a mode of reasoning (method) and a mode of representation (phenomena) capable of going beyond description to explanation (J. Bruner, 1986, 1990; Clandinin & Connolly, 2000; Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997, Richardson, 1995). Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) hold that narratives fall into three types — identity, memory, and community — all pertinent to this study. Increasingly, narrative as a methodology is used both to portray and display the impact of the actions of individuals, cultures, periods of history, or political entities over time in an accessible way that allows one to then consider action or response (Richardson, 1995, p. 200).

Interest in exploring the nature and uses of narrative as a mode of holding, exploring, and transmitting knowledge has increased in recent years, as influenced by the so called "narrative turn" in the cultural study of literature and language (Barthes, 1977, Rayment-Pickard, 2000). A significant body of literature and practice has developed in a variety of fields of study (Barthes, 1977) including those of aesthetics and literary analysis (Barthes, 1977), philosophy (Ricouer, 1991), history (White, 1981), biblical studies (Watson, 1997), psychology (J. Bruner, 1985, 1990), sociology (Richardson, 1995), education (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000) and ethnography (E. Bruner, 1986a). Narrative forms of transmission, however, are as old as human communication (Eisner, 1997). Barthes (1977) broadens the issue by reminding us of the "numberlessness of narratives" (p. 79) and the many genres involved. Situating this narrative knowledge base is a dynamic process given the role of narrative in traditional societies and more recently in the context of evolving and interdisciplinary academic traditions.

Narrative inquiry works with/within a knowledge system in which truth is generated and organized through "modes of experience" in a manner atypical of traditional scientific formulations (Gadamer, 1993). Narrative methodology relies on procedures of verification that are quite different than those of the Western traditions of rationalism or empiricism. Its rationality is found in the rationale and context for its usage. Narrative looks for connections between events and meaning rather than universal truth conditions. This does not mean, however, that narratives do not reflect truth, empirical knowledge, or the logic of reasoning; rather, that these concepts will be found within a narrative format. These connections hold the meanings that then offer us "transubjective" knowledge and insights useful in first exploring and then framing systems of meaning (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). Frank (2002) contends that the use of narrative provides us with an authenticity particularly relevant to the disillusionments of modernity by providing, through story, a starting point for comparative sense and meaning making.

Cross-cultural forms further extend the archetypal nature of narrative formats. Western theorists point to the basic format of narrative as temporal (Ricouer, 1991), as one of a logical progression of beginning, middle and end, as representative of structures of language, and mode of emplotment (type of story) as an aspect of narrative definition (Rayment-Pickard, 2000). At the same time, in the Indigenous narratives told in this account, while some stories are told in this fashion others are not and hold within them their own forms for coming towards knowledge. As such, narrative forms connected through relationship hold a powerful means of transmitting knowledge and cultural perspectives through cognitive and social mechanisms. Yet their "legitimacy" is often situated in the politics of institutions of inquiry and knowledge validation.

Traditionally we think of narrative as story or myth, and of the role of narrative accounts in the cultural continuity that provides meaning and identification to individuals, families, and groups of people. Anthropologist Edward Bruner (1986b) describes narrative structures as "constitutive as well as interpretive" (p. 144) in terms of identity. Thus narratives may be seen as identity performances. "We express, display, make claims for who we are — and who we would like to be — in the stories we tell and how we tell them" (Mishler, 1999, p. 19) thus making, "narrative structures . . . constitutive as well as interpretive" (E. Bruner, 1986b, p.144). In modern Western society we tend to organize societies around meta-narratives of identity and purpose. As we know all too well, in large societies these meta-narratives, if unexamined, may become fixed hegemonic structures that disempower the narratives of "others." Narrative approaches have often been used to counter this othering by recounting the experience of historical victimization, as in accounts of holocaust or slavery (Eisner, 1997). Using a narrative approach to explore such complex phenomena humanizes the experience. The meaning of that experience is highlighted in ways that promote empathic understanding beyond that found in quantitative data (Eisner, 1997). This form of narrative as testimonial has been found to be empowering to Indigenous people's worldwide (L. T. Smith, 1999).

Narratives contain power and justifications for use of power as an aspect of meaning (E. Bruner, 1986a). Goodard notes the empowering and potentially decolonizing role of narrative:

> Narrative is a way of exploring history and questioning the historical narratives of the colonizer which have violently interposed themselves in place of the history of the colonized. Experimentation, especially with structures of chronology, is part of this challenge, a radical questioning of historiographical versions of the past as developed in the "master narratives' in order to rewrite the historical ending. (Beard, 2000, p. 73)

This echoes the early work of Howard Adams (1989), in the context of Canadian Aboriginal peoples, who notes that history is often owned by the colonizers. Métis and First Nations histories are silenced and replaced with histories that belittle Native peoples, values, and experience. By comparing the narratives or storied accounts of those who have counted in historical recollections with those who have not a more representative version of "reality" may be explored (Cruikshank, 1988; 1992a, 1993, 2003).

Narrative not only involves the telling of the tale, but also the selection of emphasis, detail, and ordering to reflect the purpose and context of the telling (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). The narratives we tell have much to say about personal identity and the cultural manifestations of that identity (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997). By linking past, present, and future, narrative allows us to explore both the continuity and change experienced in our lives (Richardson, 1995). However, narrative inquiry is not only useful in understanding individuals. As Hinchman & Hinchman (1997) note:

> Narrative has become a favored concept among many practitioners of the human sciences who study collectivities. Individual narratives, and even the historical tales woven by second order storytellers, figure in the more encompassing process of community-formation and maintenance. The stories that individuals create often strike variations upon a repertoire of socially available narratives that, in turn, legitimize the community and guarantee its continued existence. (p. xvii)

These issues are particularly relevant for marginalized groups where accurate histories may be empowering and mythologized histories stifling.

Models of inquiry

Jean Clandinin and Michael Connolly (2000) hold an interesting perspective on narrative as a method of inquiry. They hold that narratives must be explored in four dimensions: time, space, personal, and social (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). Narrative inquiry is always many-layered and interwoven (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000). Their understanding of narrative is based in a Deweyian view of experience which considers both personal and social strands along with the continuity of the flow of experience (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). MacIntyre's (1981) concept of the significance of narrative unity in one's life narrative also informs their view. Particularly relevant for this discussion is Clandinin and Connolly's emphasis on context as a factor in what we know and how we know or perceive experience.

The goal of research then is to represent experience. Clandinin and Connolly (2000) suggest that a narrative approach is the closest one can get to doing so. The storied nature of the research includes the storied reaction of the researcher as an integral component of inquiry into the temporal, spatial, social, and institutional factors at work. The narrative inquirer tries to make sense of life as lived (experienced) in the field by using field texts as a place to ground the inquiry

(Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). However, the successful researcher must also explore "how to think narratively at the boundaries between narrative and other forms of inquiry" (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000, p. 80).

As aspects of research, not only stories are recorded but actions and events which are in and of themselves narratives of experience (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). This allows for recognition of both the relational and embodied nature of the fieldwork where the researcher's experience is an aspect of the inquiry. It also respects the need to slip out of the intimacy and intensity of this involvement at times (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000). Using the field notes as a base added to by other relevant texts (photos, letters, documents) allows for the eventual research text to be based in a rich (although recognized as interpretive) picture of narrative moments. Thus the aim is "to keep in the foreground of our writing a narrative view of experience, with the participants' and researchers' narratives of experience situated and lived out on storied landscapes as our theoretical methodological framework" (Clandinin & Connolly, 2000, p. 128). People's narrative histories located in place and relationship may lead to re-storying futures. Clandinin & Connolly (2000) recommend avoiding the issue of causality in narrative inquiry but to consider explanatory value, authenticity, adequacy, plausibility, and the quality of wakefulness in the researcher as important to successful research.

In his work with identity formation in North American craft persons, Mishler (1999) uses a four part format to analyze oral history narratives through what he refers to as a critical analytic perspective:

First,

> The aim is to develop an approach to the analysis of personal narratives and life history interviews that both works out from respondents' "ways of telling" and, at the same time, locates their representation within a broader cultural and social context . . .

Second,

> The approach seeks to preserve the variability among identity trajectories. Rather than construct an idealized, abstract scheme of development . . . As an analogue to the linguistic model

> (langue/parole), I am proposing that culturally defined categories, repertoires, and trajectories for identity are "realized" by individuals in various ways . . .

Third,

> This perspective highlights the distinctive way in which narrative forms of analysis contribute to the study of lives by providing a contrast to variable-oriented, positivist models . . .

Fourth,

> Narrative accounts are not simply expressions of a story, the *one* [italics original] true story already and always inside the person. Rather, all "stories" are situated retellings. They are responsive to the contexts of their production, in our case, a life history interview. (p. 50-51)

Mishler (1999) further makes the assumption that narratives are socially situated actions and that the interviewer/interviewee relationship is part of that context

Ethical Issues

Introduction

Narratives are often embedded within and told in response to systems of power. This poses ethical dilemmas for the researcher. Given this dynamic, Hyden and Overlien (2004) suggest three questions to keep in mind in ascertaining the aspects of power/control "in the joint enterprise of the teller and listener in producing stories" (p. 255). They are:

1. Concerning the *status of the stories:* Where are the stories located in the institutional world? . . . Who is privileged by the storytelling?
2. Concerning the *control of the stories:* Who owns them? Who is in charge of them: the teller, the listener . . . or the surrounding society? . . . Is it possible to gain control of them, that is, to move from a powerless to a more powerful position?
3. Concerning the *responsibility for the stories*. If the stories are harmful, who is to blame and who is to shoulder the responsibility? (p. 255)

These questions proved to be very useful to me as I worked with the stories presented in this study. At the same time, Sands (2001) reminds us, in the context of Aboriginal oral histories, not to assume that narrators are not in control and telling stories for their own purposes. Doing so assumes a victim rather than an agent stance. Narrative forms of research allow for greater agency of participants, particularly in presenting "truths" from within experience and perception (Mishler, 1996; E. Bruner, 1986) which we must be careful not to undermine by screening or framing from within our own assumptions This echoes Cruikshank's comments regarding the role of the three women she worked with in the Yukon who, from the outset, directed her towards the type of knowledge and modes of representation that they felt were appropriate both for her learning and for their vision of the product of their work together (Cruikshank, 1990, 1999a, 1999b). Interestingly, Dogrib Elder Harry Simpson holds that since the legends of long, long ago are held in the land, the features of the land, and since we don't travel on the land as much as in the past they should now be recorded and written down (Andrews et al., 1998). It seems he expects that both written and oral tradition will continue:

> I tell the young people to listen to what we have to say because then they will be able to benefit from the teachings that we are passing on to them. Our oral tradition, once written, will last as long as this land, and if they retain this information in memory they will gain from it. (p. 317)

At the same time Elsie Mather, working in Alaska with her own Y'upik tradition, notes challenges in terms of relationship, fluidity, and objectifying stories (Mather, 1995). She reminds us that while she is going ahead with written versions, the cultural systems of relationship, respect, and responsibility toward relationships with environment, community, and with language need to continue (Mather, 1995). The Elders involved in this project all felt that it was appropriate to produce their stories in textual form at this point. Their primary motivation was their pride in the stories, in their backgrounds, in the people who told stories to them, in the knowledge involved, and in the needs of future generations as they no longer believed the schools would do this work for them; they would have to do it themselves.

That Indigenous narratives in the form of *telling*, *dreaming*, *living*, and *remembering* story (in circular time frames) have power is richly illustrated both in oral history and more recently in literary form. James Welch's (1986) novel *Fools Crow* illustrates these issues richly through depiction of the interaction of experience, culturally located dreaming, and choice making. Leslie Marmon Silko (1977) famously voiced this power in the song poem that introduces her novel *Ceremony*, a novel that goes on to illustrate through its telling what is meant by, "you don't have anything if you don't have the stories" (p. 2). Silko (1977) shows how story may move and grow in ways that can counter evil and foster growth and that the life of the people is both inherent in and dependent on this growth. As her narrator says, "I will tell you something about stories; [he said] they aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see" (Silko, 1977, p. 2) or as Thomas King (2003) rephrases it, "The truth about stories is that's all we are" (p. 2). Managing this dynamic, along with those involved in translation, requires reflection; it entails both warning and opportunity.

Many Aboriginal narratives told as teachings are closest in Western form to that of biblical parable. This does not mean that they should be categorized as parables or, on the other hand, as myth. In this case time is not ordered and message is not made obvious. Beginnings and endings note only that, they don't reiterate message; the message is for you to find as needed, when needed, often only many years later. Dene Elder George Blondin (1997) reminds us, "You may have to work out the meaning of some of these stories for yourself. Dene legends don't all have a nice beginning, middle, and end like on television" (p. viii). Classification into Western narrative genres or modes of emplotment often obscures opportunity for understanding.

Another challenge of narrative accounts lies in portraying historical experience in either an overly romanticized account or what Vizenor (1989) refers to as the tendency of social sciences to describe Indian peoples in a "hypertragic" fashion. By doing so we fall prey to another Western dichotomy — uncivil savage or noble but victimized. Who decides what is dismissed as romanticized, metaphorical, or mythological rather than highly relevant narrative knowing has significant political implications (Cruikshank, 1999; Nadasdy, 2003). Issues of relative emphasis on voice versus context produce tensions that must be addressed by the researcher (Gubrium, 1995). By giving weight only to the voice of the narrative while failing to critically analyze the political and social dynamics we may minimize the structural obstacles that exist and their impact on the narrative response (Gubrium, 1995). Failure to acknowledge the subjective and the contextual, in essence, fails to produce what is most needed: both a decolonized account and an authentic narrative. In doing so it is helpful, as Vizenor (1989) recommends, to recognize the trickster tales and the humorous comedic strategies embedded in the narratives often presented by Aboriginal peoples themselves. Given the assumption that historically based methodologies are couched in the personal history of lived experience, traditional transmissions of cultural norms and behaviors, and the political implications of power, story and ownership of time, narrative is a powerful mode for coming to understanding.

Several recent texts using narrative ethnography have been completed in work with subarctic peoples (Goulet, 1994, 1998; Ridington, 1988; Sharp, 2001; D.M.Smith, 1993, 2002). Narrative understandings and methods are particularly appropriate to this particular study, situated in contrasting narratives of identity, place, and memory. In presenting the material on the six Elders most actively involved in this project I have experimented with narrative ethnography in the service of both honouring their words as well as most effectively illustrating the interconnected nature of their stories.

Methodological coherence

Narrative is one of the traditional ways that northern Aboriginal peoples prefer to learn, along with experiential and observational learning (Goulet, 1998). Dene knowledge holders may assess the learner's readiness for this learning and tailor what is given accordingly (Goulet, 1998). Additionally, as Ridington (2000) experienced in the context of work with the oral tradition of the Beaver, the storyteller takes into account what the listener already knows of the larger narrative when telling any piece of the overall narrative work. In this context, narrative learning occurs over a period of time and over retellings and coming to knowing that is confirmed in an appropriate form with knowers. There is also much that is unsaid due to respect for the learners' autonomy and due to feelings about what type of knowledge may be shared outright (Goulet, 1998). A feel for this aspect of narrative including the nonverbal accompaniments or indicators develops over time. What is left unsaid may be even more powerful than what is communicated verbally. This presents challenges in the context of textual representation.

Like other researchers, I came to respect the role dreams, visions, and spiritual experiences that enhance awareness had in and on the research (Castellano, 2000; Goulet, 1994, 1998; Guedon, 1994; Marker, 2004; Schwartz, 1994; Hill, 1995; Simpson, 2000; D, M. Smith, 2002; Struthers, 2001; E. Turner, 1996) and accepted their role as an aspect of Indigenous methodology or Native science (Cajete, 2000a, 2004). Discussing these aspects of my own experience with friends from within the community and having them discuss theirs with me helped me to understand the role of these experiences. Doing so helped me to listen to the accounts given to me with my ears (mind) more fully open. As Ridington (1990) notes:

> Northern hunting people negotiate a mutually understood and accepted view of the world by consensus and agreement. Their style of communication is egalitarian. Their lives are storied in the running to and fro of their discourse. *A narrative style using actualities from Indian discourse is an appropriate means of translating their cultural reality* [italics added]. (p. 257)

Thus narrative is best learned in a manner coherent with experience while remaining cognizant of the political and ethical ramifications. As Goulet (1994, 1998) and Ridington (2000) have noted, interviews based in a Western format of knowledge gathering just won't cut it with Elders who will not teach you until they experience your readiness to learn, with the first step being direct involvement with the people (Goulet, 1994). In this form, learning occurs in the traditional contexts and learning styles of the people. Cruikshank experienced a continual redirecting of discussions to the background narratives required to understand what the women she worked with wished to communicate (Cruikshank, 1990).

Meadows and Morse (2001) have defined methodological coherence as "the adherence to the assumptions and consequently to the strategies within each particular method" (p. 193). I agree with Goulet that a more involved approach to participant-observation is required and hold that failing to do so is an example of methodological incoherence. By this I mean that this more radical form of participation is a legitimate and authentic way to proceed, which links methodology with traditional learning styles. Carrying out research in this form is methodologically coherent, or at least as close to it as we may be able to get.

Many ethnographers have noted the changes to self, personally and perceptually, occurring as an aspect of research relationships, processes, and learnings (Davies, 1999; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Coffey, 1999; Young & Goulet, 1994). Indeed, contributors to the Young and Goulet edited volume (1994), *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters*, hold that the contributions made could not have been accomplished, or perhaps recognized and understood, without *near-experience* participation, particularly as guided by Indigenous Elders. This provides us with a challenge, one quite familiar to ethnographers, our theory and methodology is based in one tradition of rationality, while the learning and reasoning styles used in research communities may be found in another. The literature review upon which we justify the need for our research is based in a Western academic worldview (Ruttan, 2004c). This may locate research with Indigenous peoples in a conflict from the outset, one where the research rationale has to twist itself around to find work-arounds within divergent rationalities (Shweder, 1986) located in the intersection and interaction between Indigenous cultures and Western researchers. Given these dynamics, a highly experiential ethnography (Goulet, 1998) informed by narrative (Cruikshank, 1990 Ridington, 1988, 1990) is an appropriate methodological bridge.

Ethical dialogues

Challenges arise in producing text and in its analysis. In the case of Aboriginal respondents, while some of the material resulting from interviews may be personal narrative other material is understood as oral history which may need to be handled differently than the more personal narrative. In the process of narrative analysis of transcribed material the initial text is oral. The research dialogue and its transcriptions make a life the text which is then framed in time and place. From an Aboriginal perspective this knowledge is circular and continuous; to explore it in a Western way we make it flat, linear, fixed to the page, and organized within the assumptions we have made. There are challenges and opportunities in doing this. If we deconstruct the text, do we belittle the life and reject the holistic nature of the material, or do we see it more clearly? Ownership and usage of narratives need to be considered carefully with the knowledge holder. Interpreting can become appropriation. Issues of linguistic interpretation are complex. Hermeneutics are a possible bridge to solid ground at the end of the research process — the product (Meyer, 2002, 2003). Clifford (1988) reminds us of the role of what he refers to as hermeneutic suspicion in regarding the authoritative "voice" of ethnographic texts and examines a number of ways that ethnographers have attempted to deal with these challenges.

An important dialogue is occurring regarding this issue, as Murray & Rice's (1999 edited volume illustrates. Language is central to worldview presenting many dilemmas in translation with both cultural and political ramifications (Johnston, 1999). Yet in many subarctic communities Elders appear to hold a very pragmatic stance and actively participate or in some cases initiate the recording of oral history (Bird, 1991; Cruikshank, 1990; Thom & Blondin, 1987; G. Blondin, 1997; Maldaver, 1993; Paper, 2003). In Ft. Smith, Sister Agnes Sutherland recalls Madeline Bird (1991) keeping at her until she compiled the book of memories given to her by Mrs. Bird. Julie Cruikshank, a non-Aboriginal researcher struggling with these issues, notes that the elderly Aboriginal women who were her research partners felt that the use of English as a medium for traditional knowledge was workable and in some ways even preferable given the language skills of their grandchildren (Cruikshank, 1990, 1999). What remained essential was the women's *continued* involvement in and control of the preparation of the final written work in order to preserve ownership and ensure a continuing basis within the worldview of the original (Cruikshank, 1999a). Still, these are complex issues of both ethics and practice that challenge the completeness and continuation of the translations of knowledge and knowledge systems.

Indigenous methodology

In an attempt to find ways to carry out research based from within Western institutions more *respectful* of, *effective* with, and *relevant* to Indigenous communities, Indigenous researchers have experimented with using methods from within both

Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Indigenous methodology has been defined broadly as centred in world-view. For example, "If we consider an Indigenous research methodology to be a framework from which we view the world, then Indigenous research methods are tools we use to find answers to our questions" (Cardinal et al., 2004, p. 4).

Indigenous methodology is always grounded in a set of principles. Cora Weber-Pillwax (2004) describes principles of *respect*, *reciprocity*, and *relationality* as essential. In the context of work with Aboriginal peoples in Canada, Brant-Castellano (2000) describes three culturally-based methods of knowledge: *traditional knowledge*, *empirical knowledge*, and also *revealed knowledge*. This means that methods such as working with Elders, listening to dreams and visions, and sharing in talking circles — often classified as metaphysical or mystical in Western discourses — are an aspect of what makes for knowledge on which one can base one actions. Further, the methodology must suit not only the research question but also the relationships between researcher and community including those of newcomer or insider/outsider, ethnicity, the history of the community in regards to these relationships, and current mutual expectations (Weber-Pillwax, 2004; Sarris, 1993).

Importantly, Indigenous research is based in community and benefit for that community. Steinhauer, citing Shawn Wilson (2002) holds that, "Research is not just something that's out there: it's something that you're building for yourself and for your community" (p. 179). Marlene Brant Castellano (2004) further defines Indigenous research as knowledge creation for social benefit and cautions that:

> If researchers and those researched have vastly different notions of what constitutes social benefit and how it is achieved, the research is unlikely to satisfy the needs and expectations of participants on both sides of the divide. (p. 103).

Thus, Indigenous research is also, and importantly so, up front about issues of power. This is an essential understanding, in light of the misuses to which research has often been put and the misunderstandings created as a result, particularly in the light of the colonial experience. The impact of these factors has been used to stereotype views and disenfranchise communities who have had to live with the results (Rigney, 1999). In response, Indigenous methodology privileges Indigenous voices and perspectives (Martin in Steinhauer, 2002).

An additional problem with traditional academic research processes is that they, for the most part, insert responses based in Aboriginal knowledge systems within traditional thought categories of Western science (Gilchrist, 1997). Highly influential in this effort at developing Indigenous approaches to research is the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999). Shawn Wilson (2003), in a model of the development of Indigenous methodology, puts Smith's work within what he refers to as the third stage in this process. He sees work on the fourth stage developing with scholars currently experimenting with their own methodological traditions or mixes such as Kahakalau's (2002) "Indigenous heuristic action research" and Meyer's (2003) "Hawaiian hermeneutics." As part of this fourth stage, new methodological "mixes" or "melds" (Wilson, 2003, p. 161) have been created (L.T. Smith, 1999; Kahakalau, 2002; Meyer, 2001, 2002, 2003; Wilson, 2003). Some scholars looking for a workable model have referred to their efforts as bi-cultural approaches (Brant-Castellano, 2004). For example, a recent document on Aboriginal health published by the Government of Alberta's Department of Health and Wellness combined analysis of frequency of health conditions with an Indigenous methodology using Aboriginal Elders as advisors who acknowledged the influence of dreams on their contributions to the research in an attempt to produce a bicultural product.

In this context, an Indigenous narrative approach to analysis of oral accounts of history seemed highly appropriate to me. This means that respect for the cultural and oral basis for narrative (worldview), respect for knowledge holders and their communities (relationship), while acknowledging the continuing political uses of narratives of society (hegemony) and research sources (truth) must be kept in mind. It also means that the heart, integrity, and motivation of the researcher are integral (Weber-Pillwax, 2003; Wilson, 2003) to research relationships, outcomes, and responsibilities. However, it also means that given my own background and what remains unconscious and unexamined, what is produced is inevitably a bicultural composition (Sarris, 1993). Hopefully, it is one respectful of choices made by the participants in what to give me and of my choices in how to respond (Sarris, 1993).

Ethical Issues in Aboriginal Research Contexts

The process of picking our way between the expectations of research institutions, our personal values, and the collective interests of research communities can give rise to complex ethical dilemmas. In the context of research partnerships with Aboriginal communities, Western ethical principles have been critiqued as incomplete (Piquemal, 2001; Weijer, 1999; Weijer et al., 1999). Further, competing values in this context do not lend well to utilitarian weightings of value. This critique has led to the development of new codes of ethics by professional organizations and by research communities (Gibson et al., 2001; Macaulay, 1994; Macaulay et al., 1998; Miheusah, 1998; Weijer, 1999). Indigenous scholars have been leaders in this discussion as they work towards increasing control of how their communities, history, cultures, behavior, and aims have been and will be portrayed by Western research (Henderson, 2000a; Macaulay, 1994; Miheusah; 1998; L.T. Smith, 1999; Weijer, 1999, Weijer et al., 1999). The discussion involving the ethics of researcher/researched relationships with and within Aboriginal communities has been described as having been initiated in response to the following factors:

> First, aboriginal communities are often geographically isolated and possess histories, cultures and traditions distinct from the dominant culture. Second, there is an evolving political consciousness and aspiration to self-determination in aboriginal communities. Third, aboriginal peoples are increasingly concerned that research may adversely affect them and their values. (Weijer et al., 1999, p. 277)

Many Indigenous scholars present this issue in even stronger terms raising issues of disempowerment, bias, appropriation, political and academic control, and the need for decolonization of research efforts (Battiste, 2000a, 2000b; Flaherty 1994; Henderson, 2000b; Miheusah, 1998; L.T. Smith, 1999). All too often Aboriginal communities find they do not recognize themselves as they are presented in research reports completed by “experts” (Deloria, 1999; Henderson, 2000a; L.T. Smith, 1999). These frustrations are compounded when this same material is then given greater legitimacy than their own voices, turned around, and used by Euro-Canadian institutions to teach their own children in schools, colleges, and universities or used to establish government policy and programs, thus negating the words and practices of communities and Elders (Beaver, 2002; Deloria, 1999; Cruikshank, 1993). This phenomenon not only represents poor scholarship; the impacts on Aboriginal communities are extreme (Deloria, 1999).

In my own experience I received mixed community reaction to this study. I have received much support as a researcher and as a longtime non-Aboriginal community member. I have also been reminded that the community will no longer tolerate the misuse of information provided, the misuse of research results, or the failure to return research results. Given the history of government directed natural resource, social, and health research conducted in this community over the years, research is often seen by local people to be biased in favor of the source of funding. It is also a location where issues related to contested knowledge bases comes to the foreground. Research is thus a contested term with a political, social, and an economic history. For example a community leader noted that while he expected more from the current project:

> We have had lots of researchers come to this community. They don't understand the people. They come here for a short time, talk to a few people, then they leave and write a report with their name on it that is totally inaccurate. Then other researchers quote them, continuing the problem. And you have white guys like at the college or the forestry department quoting these guys instead of listening to us. No researcher that has ever come here has really tried to get the peoples' side of it, as it really was. They don't want to really listen and learn from what we know. We need this if we are going to get information to our young people about what really happened, how these things affected us and where we are today. But we need it to be the truth. (R. Beaver, 2002)

In the context of this particular community, this response often involves reaction to local biological research. Taking a species management rather than a holistic approach to ecosystems has minimized the value of traditional ecological knowledge and knowledge holders and has led to unsatisfactory outcomes. This experience has left behind much bitterness. People, animals, forests, and the social history of the land have been affected by National Parks, federal, territorial, and provincial natural resource policy and legislation. The failure of these institutions to honour the intent of Treaty 8 has resulted in several court challenges.

In addition, government generated health and social service research is commonly produced, mediated, or shelved in response to changeable political concerns and priorities (L. Ruttan, 1998). The proliferation of research by government departments is often understood to be a stalling tactic that holds off decision making. As R. Beaver (2002) comments, "Whenever we want to start a new project the government constantly tells us, let's wait until the research is complete before making any decisions." While community input may be gathered in the initial stages, it is often neglected when it comes to interpretation of data or decisions regarding if, when, and how any implementation will occur. This approach negates local knowledge holders by privileging research-based knowledge and undermines local self-government by using the research effort as a mechanism to forestall or control action. Resentment also develops in response to the limited availability of funds for community research through government or institutionally controlled agendas (i.e. through government programs or through university administered research institutes funded by federal monies). Even if those agendas are said to be on "behalf of " Aboriginal peoples they nevertheless force community needs to be squeezed into specific categories and limited time frames rather than to be addressed in a truly responsive and holistic fashion (Flaherty, 1995; E. Beaver, 2002; R. Beaver, 2002 a, 2002 b, Michel, 2002). At the same time, the time and commitment required to do research in a more responsive fashion often leaves university researchers in a time, process, and funding crunch. These factors can result in an outcome that is experienced as less than promised by the community, reinforcing the perception of exploitation or one-sidedness to benefits (Lapadat & Janzen, 1994). This is particularly the case when researchers fail to return results to the community as promised.

Challenges

As I began this study I expected that there would be many ethical challenges ahead and that at least some would be difficult. Facing these issues within the context of my network of community relationships, I believed, would help to avoid at least some of the potential mis-steps along the way. I expected that one of the ethical issues that might be particularly challenging would involve the handling of sensitive, personal emotions regarding interactions between community members. A government and mission centre throughout most of the twentieth century, the community has struggled with many of the dynamics that result from this colonial experience (Adams, 1989; Memmi, 1965; Thomas, 1966-67 a.; Tully, 2000; Watkins, 1977). Based in cross-cultural, competitive and often highly charged political interactions elements of bias and conflict may be present in community-wide efforts. Challenges inherent in the Indian Act and First Nations governance policy often complicate decision making and exacerbate internal political processes in many Aboriginal communities, leaving residues of hurt and anger. The researcher also needs to be aware of the potentially divisive group dynamics not infrequent in "post-colonial" settings. This may mean that participants are looking for allies on contentious community issues. In this case, I also knew there was much good will, a rich sense of community history and possible futures, and, also, community members who were interested in working together.

As a non-Aboriginal professional in this community I experienced the privilege that went with that status no matter my own views on this. I was also affected by the processes that influence the "colonizer who resists" (Memmi, 1965) contextualizing my own departure from the community. Needing to work on these issues, in the best way I knew how, work towards decolonization became an aspect of my Ph.D. work. At three different points in the research I remember having a dream that clearly indicated I was struggling with these issues. To be honest, while I knew I would eventually go ahead, some of the potential pitfalls were intimidating and I hesitated until I felt ready to handle these issues.

Informed consent and confidentiality

I was also concerned about how to handle issues of informed consent in order to respect participants and act within university expectations. A series of written questions based on the model provided by the review committee was developed to ensure participants' awareness of the uses of the research and to address confidentiality. This list of questions proved too long for most of the participants. Given the focus of the research on the historical and culturally based knowledge of community Elders, I expected that participants would want me to use their own names. This indeed proved to be the case. A question asking whether they wanted their own names used or held in confidence was added to the consent form to address this issue. It seemed that withholding their names would be experienced as minimizing acknowledgement of their importance to the research as knowledge holders.

Informed consent, or consent received from the subject after he or she has been carefully and truthfully informed about the research (Fontana & Frey, 1993) is important. Researchers have typically struggled with how to provide sufficient information for participants to truly understand the research, its focus, and possible consequences for individuals and communities. Yet, at the same time, the researcher must be careful to avoid any forms of pressure or influence that might affect research results (Davies, 1999). The researcher must ensure that consent is truly informed and that it is ongoing (Piquemal, 2001; Weijer, et al., 1999). Other researchers working with the life stories of Aboriginal Elders have also recommended a process of ongoing reconfirmation with participants as an aspect of research partnership (Cruikshank, 1990, 1999; L. Simpson, 2000).

An additional dynamic that may increase complexity is faced when considering questions of collective knowledge, where the consequences of misuse of information may impact an entire community. Given the context of the experience of Aboriginal peoples as research "subjects," informed consent needs to go beyond simply obtaining signatures or meeting only minimally with community leaders. Issues of credit, appropriation, benefit, ownership, and joint production of knowledge must be addressed up front (Gibson et al., 2001), often challenging the traditional academic approach to confidentiality. Confidentiality is traditionally seen as protecting individuals from potential harm. Baez (2001) and M. Evans (2004), however, problematize this assumption. They hold that emphasizing secrecy silences the knowledge holder and failing to challenge the status quo with the power of voice, role models disenfranchisement (Baez, 2001; M. Evans, 2004).

The following section which uses examples from the current study illustrates the need to explore the complexity of these issues further.

Illustrations

Louis Beaver looked at me perplexed when I asked him to sign the two-page informed consent form approved by the University ethics committee. I had given him tobacco, he had accepted it, so what was the issue? He went on to say:

> There is no problem, what would the problem be? I am sharing my father's knowledge; it is not about other people. I don't need to sign something. This is mine to share and not bothering anyone else.

Worried about my responsibility to both Louis and the University I tried to discuss the issue again the next time I visited him. Looking at me, he signed his name and then asked me to write the following on the consent form:

> Hereby I give my knowledge to you, what I have seen here, stories about the history of this place. [You] should be able to use it any way. It is without any lying. It is a true story — what I seen, how people used to live here. All what I seen myself and stories about the old time and what my dad seen.

Arthur Beaulieu, when asked about consent was somewhat offended, implying that he wasn't ignorant, he knew what we were doing, and that he was involved intentionally. Frank Laviolette started his account by saying that what he was sharing with me were: "honest, hand down stories." In other words they were true, they were handed down to him, and he had the right to share them. He went on further to indicate that of course he wanted his name and those of the people whose stories he told used, it was his knowledge or knowledge given to him, wasn't it? Other participants indicated that while they did not want to sign a form it was their knowledge to give and of course they wouldn't be giving it to me if they didn't know I would use it. Worried about my responsibility I ended up asking those who were uncomfortable with signing to discuss the issues with me on tape and to indicate their consent in this form. This proved to be unproblematic except for two participants who preferred that I take down their words by hand, as the audiotape made them uncomfortable, followed by their signature.

What is important here is acknowledging the differing traditions regarding knowledge transmission, privacy, and ownership between University and community. This resulted in the need for flexibility in process. In no case was anyone unwilling to have their words used. They were well aware that that was what we were about. In many cases these old people indicated they were consciously doing so given that young people no longer sit and listen to their Elders as they had done and that our work together would at least mean these words would be passed on, albeit in a less than perfect form. They were very clear it was their right to do so. In this community all participants wanted their own names used as a matter of respect and ownership.

A more difficult challenge proved to be related to political instability in local institutions. The politics of relationship and who decides for community were encountered in a heightened manner in this context. Although I received support for my research during the previous year from local Aboriginal organizations, I was denied continued support following a bitter band election that eventually resulted in a court challenge. I believed in and tried to use a community-based approach to research. However, as a member of the community, my personal relationships with community members, including the leader of the opposing faction, became a factor and I was denied the letter of support by the new chief and council required for the yearly renewal of my government research license. This meant I could not pursue research activities while the situation was unsettled. While I continued to visit with Elders, I could not carry out formal interviews during this time. While frustrating I tried to be patient and worked on other things during this period.

However, the situation raised issues for some of the Elders who were anxious to get on with audio-taped interviews and believed the First Nation administration had no right to restrict their independence. Frank Laviolette was particularly concerned that he might die before we got a chance to record what he wanted told. Thus who speaks for whom, who has the right to give consent, whose knowledge is it, and how to balance individual and collective rights proved to be a multi-sided issue in this case.

Following an eight-month period and another change in administration I was able begin formal work again. The experience raised complicated issues about the nature, control, and role of relationships in contexts such as this one. By putting principles which I believed in into the context of real life community dynamics, complex issues regarding my involvement as a within/without member of the community and in related to the ownership of knowledge were raised

Finally, the most complex ethical dilemma involved in this research was how to handle the nature of some of the material stressed by participants as essential to the question I asked: "What makes for history from their own perspective?" They all referred to medicine power, even if only briefly, but several of the participants stressed it as inseparable from an understanding of the way people lived and thought about history. They wanted these stories written down now — stories first heard in their youth — as an essential aspect of the answer to the question of what makes for history. Their motivation was so that their grandchildren would know their pride in this history. These stories were not simply tied to the Western story of exploration, trade, and travel but more importantly in the lives of people who 'knew something," who had great ability. This perspective on history is tied to a worldview in which there is no separation of spiritual, empirical, and relational ways of learning and living. The spiritual aspect is essential to a good life and underpins perspectives on what is important as recounted in the stories of knowledge and power of those whose success in that life is indicated by such.

Still, this presented me with quandaries. I did not ask for this type of story but was given them in response to the question I asked. I had given tobacco; it had been accepted; when I asked about whether I should share these stories I was clearly told to go ahead. Now I had a responsibility to do so in a good way. However, in many Aboriginal communities it would be considered wrong to tell these stories and this worried me. For example, Wilfred Tootoosis explains that for his Plains Cree community most of their history is sacred and not to be told (Kulchyski et al., 1999). At the same time Dene Elder George Blondin has written two books of history focused primarily on the importance of medicine power to the way people lived on the land and with each other (Blondin, 1990, 1997). While I have shared only a few of the stories given at this time, I have shared enough to locate them in the knowledge systems involved in this worldview. Without exploring them as given to me I could not site stories and understanding in lives, in place, and in ways of knowing. At the same time, there were a few stories which I did not feel personally ready to work with. I left the particulars of these stories for future work under additional guidance.

Paula Gunn Allen (1986) states, "My method is somewhat western and somewhat Indian" (p.7). Although not in an identical manner, this is also true in my case; Indigenous methodologies have been used along with Western methods. I have included many of the words I was given directly but I have also referred to their linkage with what has been said by other subarctic peoples and by academics. Thus there is voice and respect for spiritually experienced instruction but also analysis. Yet this is importantly not synthetic but dialogic. Marlene Brant Castellano (2004) reminds us that the discussion of ethics is in the context of self-determination but also that this is not the whole picture; it is an aspect or re-rooting communities in traditional values, principles, and order "that support life" (p. 112), that of spirit and worldview.

In summary, as I reacted to the material and experience, I found that I was working in narrative all along. Early on, I wrote poetry and stories in response to experience and developing perception. As a former therapist, I was used to the presentation of story, skilled at listening with intent, and comfortable in attempting to come to a respectful understanding of story. As I began interviews and had conversations with friends, it became apparent that what was expected of me was to listen to stories so that I might eventually tell stories in a written format that honoured peoples own historical experience. Methodological challenges were met by listening to the narratives themselves, working with the narrative nature of the material, and by trying to be responsive to the ethical parameters proposed by scholars working with Indigenous methodologies. Challenges proved personal and systemic; eventual learning was tied to the resolution of these issues.

Limitations

As in all research there are limitations in learning and knowledge claims. My learning as developed through engaging in this research is partial, it represents child's steps, and while I expect to continue to grow in understanding one cannot become another. However, one can communicate learnings as such, what one, as a learner, is beginning to see and hear as experienced with good heart and mind. Other challenges to research have included:

1. The complex mix of Aboriginal ethnicities (both political and cultural) and how to represent that mix, given the limitations of this work and the political and social changes over time.
2. Rivalries amongst ethnic groups and families within the community that meant challenging balances to personal and research behavior.
3. Although the sample was rich it was small. Although I made attempts to do so, I was not able to interview non-English speakers, due to logistics of time and translation.
4. I did not interview any of the non-Native long term residents of the community. While not the focus of this research there is value in doing so.
5. Even within the limits of this study handling the amount of data produced presented challenges, yet at the same time what I was working with is in many ways skimming the surface of what is possible.
6. My experience and relations with this community; past, present, and future frames perception and behavior. In addition, my own political beliefs about the issues raised, although not what is at issue here, also influence discussion.
7. The research took place in a particular political and social climate.It was influenced by both the past dynamics I was interested in studying and representative of current ramifications.

CHAPTER III, NARRATIVES OF HISTORY: IN THEIR TIME, MY TIME

Introduction

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that an interwoven analysis results from a process of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Data reduction is "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data complied in field notes or interview transcripts" (p. 10). Data display is "an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 11). They hold that both data reduction and data display are essential aspects of analysis. Ethnographers tend to work in an iterative process of conclusion drawing, noting, while holding open, evolving conclusions during the process of analysis. Verification in this context refers to plausibility and confirmable validity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). While Miles and Huberman (1994) discuss some of the problems of using extended text as I have done in the following sections, I have chosen to use narratives as culturally appropriate forms of data display. The data has been reduced and specific narratives selected for illustrative purposes. The aim of conclusion or rather connection drawing is served through the relational nature of these stories. Following Mason (1996), I present the individual interview material holistically and non-cross-sectionally before summarizing the material in the conclusion.

Similarly to the experience of Hermes (1998) with an Ojibwe community, I did not ask for stories but was given them as part of the response to the general question which framed the interviews. Responses reflect the participant's intent and purpose and, I suspect, response to subtle cues about protocol, respect, relationship, and ability to hear. As with Hermes (1998), I received these stories as gifts entailing responsibility. My growing awareness of that responsibility has influenced the representation of context and content. Maintaining the stories in context is essential to ethical representation. In the following narrative accounts I have not included all the stories that could be told. Some stories I was not ready to tell. I have used the participant's own words extensively in the belief that it is important to do so both ethically and as it enables the readers to make connections important to an understanding of the overall research conclusions.

Stories are interconnected in this community. This knowledge is important as a backdrop or grounding to all events; something often poorly understood by those who come to Ft. Smith from elsewhere. They usually see, instead, the narratives of exploration and trade, progressive development, the logic of legal identity, and the presentation of development as future. Euro-Canadians are used to defining history and assigning identity on our own terms, in this case, by identifying one person as Métis, another as Treaty, and that one as a Bill C-31 Indian — without realizing that these peoples grandparents were cousins and their histories are linked through kinship, economic ties, and sustainable cultural connections. I have tried to illustrate and show respect for the validation processes used by the participants regarding ~~what~~ makes for truth, including who told them, or where they experienced something in the way I have written what they then told me.For the purposes of this research, I have left the connections between them contained in the stories, as they did. While most of the material presented has been written in prose I have also worked with other techniques which highlight key issues and allows voice to speak through. These methods are described below.

"I Poems"

The Listening Guide Model, developed for work with qualitative interviews by Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, and Bertsch (2003) is rooted in Carol Gilligan's (1982) early work on ways of knowing. In this new model, the goal is, through a minimum of four guided listenings to the text (transcripts), to come to "an interpretation of the interview or text . . . that pulls together and synthesizes what has been learned about this person in relationship to the research question" (Gilligan et al, 2003). Repeated listenings to the audio-tapes and readings of the transcribed texts were an essential component for beginning to integrate and analyze the interview material. I found the first step outlined in the Listening Guide, that of the creation of "I poems" from within the transcribed text, especially valuable to understanding meaning and motivation for the participants. This process, which simply highlights the participants own words, helped me to know what was important to each participant personally before returning to the more contextual material they presented. Remembering who the "I" is in the interview and tuning into that self of experience and perception is an aspect of relational methodology which I found useful. By returning to the larger transcript for subsequent readings we keep in mind the collective nature of many of the stories told.

Ethnopoetics

In the following chapter, I have used stories as a form of "data display" appropriate to a more narrative ethnography (Ridington, 1988, Goulet, 1997). I have not included all the material presented to me, but, in response to the issues brought up by the research questions, I used more than is typical. The narratives presented represent material stressed by the participants. They illustrate the contextual and connected nature of the stories and people involved, thus illustrating the eventual conclusions of the study. I have experimented with ethnopoetic forms in presenting some of the narratives included in this section. Tedlock (1983) and others, including many ethnographers working with subarctic peoples (Brightman et al, 1994; Cruikshank, 1990; Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994; Evan & McGary, 1996; Ridington, 1988, 1996) have collaborated with oral narrators in producing texts that work within the assumption that "the treatment of oral narrative as dramatic poetry has a number of analytical advantages" (Tedlock, 1983, p. 51). Tedlock (1983) summarized the issue as follows:

> The argument that American Indian spoken narratives are better understood (and translated) as dramatic poetry than as an oral equivalent of written prose fiction may be summarized as follows: The content tends toward the fantastic rather than the prosaic, the emotions of the characters are evoked rather than described, there are patterns of repetition or parallelism ranging from the level of words to that of whole episodes, the narrators voice shifts constantly in amplitude and tone, and the flow of that voice is paced by pauses that segment it's sounds into what I have chosen to call lines. (p. 55)

In Tedlock's early work (1983), in an effort to put at least some of the hearing back into the seeing of the text, he emphasized the pausings that represent vocalization rhythms and patterns found in the work he recorded with Zuni Elders. Lines are broken in response to breath pausings in the oral account. Tedlock holds that by using a poetic style the text can more nearly approach or translate voice, including the continuum or range of pause and emphasis or what he refers to as the "internal rhythms" (p.8) of the spoken performance (Tedlock, 1983).

The early work of Dell Hymes (1977, 1981), the other originator of *ethnopoetics*, focuses more on analyzing the culturally based structural mechanisms found in the work (Sherzer and Woodbury, 1987). Hymes, by reworking narratives collected earlier as myths and folklore, has attempted to return their narrative vitality and cultural performance (D. Hymes, 1977, 1981, V. Hymes, 1987a, 1987b) from their "published prose prisons" (V. Hymes, 1987a, p. 62). From this viewpoint one can then discern verses and stanzas and in longer narratives, scenes and acts. What results are literary forms that live within voice, tradition, and context once again (Hymes, 1981). These narratives are often punctuated through the use of repetition or parallelism and are often organized in culturally based numbering patterns (usually of four) (D. Hymes, 1987a & b). The collection, *Coming to Light,* edited by Brian Swann (1996), which presents work with traditional narratives and holds numerous illustrations of both ethnopoetic and prose format was used as a guide.

My purpose in working with ethnopoetics is similar to that noted by Ridington (1996) in working with the stories of the Dunne-Za (Beaver). Ridington holds that the format of line-to-line poetics, rather than the usual prose style, allows one to "open the text to the readers' eye and ear" (p.178). These practices at least make some attempt at retaining the fluidity of the original (Mather, 1995). What is being attempted is "trying to write in a way that encourages respeaking; the imagined rediscovery of inflection, gesture, rhythm, and so on (Blaeser, 1999, p. 56). As McGary (1994) notes in discussion of work with Dena'ina stories told by her collaborator Antone Evan: "This format is not appropriate for every oral narrative, but it enhances the written record of performances by a master storyteller" (p.93). She adds that when the recorded or as-told performance "is the practiced, deliberate work of a professional narrator, representation of oral detail is more than justified." (p. 93).

Therefore, I have used an ethnopoetic format in working with some of the narratives while in others I have used a more "typical" prose narrative format. Choosing which style to use was based on my own perception of the most effective and the most culturally appropriate format for the particular narrative. I have used the ethnopoetic format for those stories which, by the expression, pitch, tone of voice, pausings, and key phrases mark a particular narrative style. In several cases I could see and hear the transformation to the oral style of the person who originally told the story. The markers which indicate type of narrative are quite evident to the practiced listener as noted by Cree speaker, Raymond Beaver:

> They usually say this is my grandfather's story, this is a passed down story, so and so told me the story, I'll tell you stories about medicine or they say *kayas mana* — the way it was, long time ago. You can tell what kind of story it is because it's like a writing style. If it's not true they use words that discount the story, *magi mana* — there he goes again, there it is again, or *osam the* — too much, which indicates where the story fits.

Issues of editing Aboriginal narratives are complex ethically; some stories may be sacred and then the commitment is often to word-for-word retelling. In others the needs of the listener or learner may influence the emphasis given or variation in the story; others are wonderfully humorous, and some are told specifically as oral history (Murray & Rice, 1999; Swann, 1996). In these ethnopoetic representations I have retained the original wording while in the prose narratives I have summarized from the words given to me and included quoted material. I have edited words minimally; however, in a few instances the order of statements in the overall interviews was changed when reproduced in a prose format. This can be problematic due to differences in cultural conventions and emphasis. In most cases the narratives were then reviewed with the originator and any changes suggested were made. In this way narratives of written communication, intended for readers of this dissertation, were formed from the verbal narratives of the participants.

The six participants are ordinary people in the context of their community. I am indebted to and have much respect for each of them. Three of them have passed away since the interviews were conducted. Within the community, some have good reputations, some less so. There are both friendships and jealousies amongst them and other people of their generation. People do not like to see anyone set themselves up as more than others. This dynamic can result in comments about why I chose to interview this one or why I did not interview someone else. I would have liked to talk with everyone in this age group; however, factors of time, local politics, and the purposes of this research as an academic dissertation influenced my ability to do so. All of the interviews were meaningful to me and, I believe, enjoyable to the participants. All the participants were honest, open, and straightforward. While I tried to get a balanced representation, in the end I accepted the circumstances that led to who I came to interview and what they had to tell. The number of interviews held with each is listed below. With most of the participants interviews were preceded by informal visits. The higher number of interviews for Frank Laviolette represents his wishes. Having just undergone surgery, he believed that he might die soon, as did indeed turn out to be the case, and wanted to have what he considered important recorded. The numbers of interviews (as opposed to visits) held with each participant are included in the table below:

Table 2. *Number of Interviews, First Language, and Current Ethnic Identity*

Arthur Beaulieu	4	Cree	Métis
Emilia Gratrix	3	Michif	Métis
Mary Heron	3	Chipewyan	Chipewyan
Louis Beaver	3	Cree	Cree
Maryanne MacDonald	2	Cree	Métis
Frank Laviolette	6	Chipewyan	Chipewyan

Arthur Beaulieu, 1930

Arthur Beaulieu, at seventy-four, sits at the Northern Lights Home. A widower, his son, Louis and daughter-in-law live in town. A large man of Cree Métis background, he sits more than he wants, remembering how strong and active old people once were. Scornfully he remarks, "Now they do nothing, just good for the remote… you have to do something, no matter if you're sore, you gotta make up your mind, if you wanna go someplace, you gotta go." There were years when Arthur drank too much; he still likes to drink once in a while. Arthur believes that you might as well spend your money while you're here. So he takes off from the personal care home where he lives and goes drinking for a few days saying, "What does it hurt, if it doesn't bother any one." And by getting out, well as he laughingly put it "You're not chicken meat if you don't only stay in one place" referring to how grouse (chickens) just sit there and are easily killed.

Arthur's model for independence is his grandfather, Métis leader Paul King Beaulieu (1849-1950) who Arthur describes as looking like a *moniyaw* (white man), blue eyes and everything. In his early nineties, Paul King traveled by himself by canoe down the Slave River and went across on the Rat River to the settlement of Rocher

River on the Taltson where his third wife and son were staying. When Paul's son (Arthur's father, Alexis) tried to stop him from taking the long trip alone he scowled, "What do you think, I'm still a man!" and off he went. Arthur remembers other independent men like this including one hundred and eight year old Francois Lockhart. Arthur knew Francois at Rocher River where Arthur was working for the Hudson's Bay store, "That old bugger he hitch up six dogs, six big dogs and take off, go and check his trap." Arthur's great- grandfather Joseph King Beaulieu was another one, even in his eighties he and his wife walked with three dogs from Ft. Vermillion to Nataways Lake, close to two hundred miles, to go trapping. So staying in a home without work to do is a challenge to Arthur because he remembers that those old men "they keep busy . . . they don't feel old."

I spent many afternoons just chatting with Arthur and other seniors at the Northern Lights Home before we ever sat down to a taped interview. My old friend Maria Brown, an eighty year old Métis woman, who had recently had a stroke, and several of the other residents, spent a fair amount of time sitting on the bench outside having smokes. They would tell me about the old days and I would get refills for their coffee mugs. Maria and Arthur often talked about how people respected their parents in the old days: "If they said something you did it!" One night when I saw a particularly spectacular display of northern lights, I remembered Maria and Arthur had warned me, in no uncertain terms, not to "whistle" at the northern lights if I didn't want the lights to be drawn down to the earth. You could be fried by their power. Although Arthur, cheeky devil that he's always been, admitted that sometimes as a boy he tried it if the lights were way up high and not too close to the ground.

Arthur knew I was, in a sense, related to him — that I was connected to the Beavers, his sister Agnes' children — he knew that I was interested in his story and that of his family. When I asked Arthur about informed consent he signed the form and then, somewhat annoyed about their being any need to do so, remarked,

> What do you think I'm telling you this for? I know you're going to write it. I want them to know we weren't pitiful. We didn't need to go running to the store every time we needed something. We just get it from the bush. We weren't really poor them days. Somebody's got to tell it [the truth].

Three audiotaped interviews were conducted (10/20/03, 12/31/03; 2/14/04) and a discussion of his life with a high school class (10/25/03) was also recorded. During the last interview checking of stories from the earlier interviews was completed. Arthur and I enjoyed these conversations very much and with his wry sense of humour we ended up laughing frequently.

To Arthur what was most important was being part of the well known Beaulieu family, the healing medicine of his parents and grandparents, the medicine stories and power of the old Beaulieus, and the sharing and reciprocity of relationships in the past. His own knowledge as someone who could work at and master any job in the bush or in the town, including running a steam engine and pulling a barge with just two cables, was important to him. The contribution his family had made to the community, his descent from the patriarch, old Francois Beaulieu II (1771-1872), and the strength and independence of knowledge of his family including his mother's curing his brother of TB by using roots, when the white doctor had nothing to offer but cod liver oil, were all a matter of pride. Arthur often brought up, that while he might not have been the best hunter or trapper, like his brother-in-law Magloire, still he knows a lot and could teach these young guys. He could show them where and how to get moose. The regret that no one now seems to want to know what he could teach is as apparent as it is puzzling to him.

I found it hard at first to recognize an "I poem" (Gilligan et al, 2003) from his words as compared to some of the other participants where they stood out. Arthur was busy telling other peoples' stories, which is what he chose to talk about, what he wanted to tell. Moreover, in his personal frame it is his family's power as Beaulieus that gives him something. These "I poems", although helpful in seeing the person, may push cultural boundaries; often the story isn't really about self so much as it is about those old men (who *knew something*). At the same time, while self may be less evident than in many Western accounts, it is not absent: the importance of the autonomous individual is also an essential cultural value. The following three "poems" taken from the transcripts, express key values and life narratives for Arthur. The first is about what his father taught him about the bush and his thankfulness that he didn't loose that by too much schooling as others who attended residential school had. The second is about his pride in working and the third about medicine power and the influence of being a Beaulieu on those who wondered if he had power.

My dad he taught me

When I was very young I start working.
I start traveling with my dad.
I didn't go to too much schooling.
I'm happy about that.
I know the country where to go.
I know how to hunt.
I know how to travel in the bush, not to get lost.
I know how to watch boat.
I know what kind of wind and everything.

What the hell, I worked on everything.

I done a lot of work on these buildings here
I worked for Johnny Voigt,
I was patient, even though he swear at you,
Sometimes I swear back.
I worked on all the new houses
Built just about every house in town here.

I worked on that one too [the cathedral].
I work for both, both place I work
I work for God there and the Devil there [cathedral and the bar].
I worked for God on one side of the road.
I worked for the devil on the other side.
I don't like that French boss, I quit.
I went to work for Pete Ferguson [building the hotel/bar].

I worked fighting fires.
I worked at both places,
I worked for Forestry,
I worked for Parks.
I worked both places, first on and off.
I worked for Forestry,
Steady . . . seventeen seasons,
Steady working.

Me, I don't worry

Quite a few of them [medicine men]
Right now I know about.
Me I don't care.
I just say anything.
Where I came from;
How I been brought up.
These guys they say
They know something.
Maybe I know more than that . . .

Arthur felt concerned that reciprocal relationships within the community were being lost. For example, if he gave a woman meat for her children she would show up at some point in the future with moccasins for him. Since you had plenty of meat, which was all you really needed, why not give someone else your money if they needed something, it would all come around in the end. Being a Beaulieu, Cree Métis, and being partly Saulteaux and the *knowing* that came from each remains very important to him, to who he is. People of particular importance to Arthur were:

1. *Alexis Beaulieu* (1880-1970) — father, a knowledgeable healer who knew roots/herbs and was consulted by people coming from all over.
2. *Paul King Beaulieu* (1849-1950) — grandfather, *mooniyow* (white man) like in looks, well liked and humorous, independent till his death at 99, he knew ahead and was powerful.
3. *Francois Beaulieu II* (1771-1872) — great, great grandfather - people were afraid of him, nine wives ("never less than three") who outfoxed the HBC and the church, became a leading Catholic convert, religious and powerful.
4. *Victoria Cardinal Beaulieu* (1884-1943) — mother, knew plants/women's healer, died when Arthur was 13, he paid for her gravestone out of money he earned.
5. *Elise (Julia) Sawan (or Nippissing)* (1860s -1940s) — grandmother, Victoria's mother, a Saulteaux Métis married to Adam Cardinal in 1881. She taught her extensive plant/root knowledge to Victoria and Alexis.

Importantly, what Arthur wanted to share, wanted to make sure I got down, is the stories of these people. Below I have presented a story of his mother's life and a story of his grandfather, Paul King's power.

Victoria's Cross

Arthur Beaulieus's mother died when he was thirteen. The youngest of nine children, Arthur was close to his mother and her loss was hard on him. Arthur spoke about her death and her broken tombstone frequently. Victoria had been a Cardinal before she and her cousin, Mary Louise, married brothers Pierre and Alexis, the two oldest sons of Paul King Beaulieu. Paul King, originally from Salt River and Ft. Resolution, had moved to the Ft. Vermillion area along with his old-father Joseph King Beaulieu. Victoria was the daughter of Adam Cardinal (1854), a Cree Métis whose family had come to Ft.Vermillion from Lac La Biche, and Elise (Julia) Sawan, a Saulteaux Métis woman whose family had originally come from Manitoba. Adam and Julia lived first in Carcajou on the Peace River before moving up to Buffalo Head Prairie near what is now La Crete, Alberta. Adam was known for his independence and great hunting skill, providing meat not only for his own family but also for some of the white families moving in (Ward, 1992). Julia and Victoria were known for their gifts of birch syrup in the spring to these new white people on neighboring farms (Ward, 1992).

Arthur was very fond of his grandmother, Julia, and enjoyed walking across the prairies with her while looking for medicinal plants, smudge pail (to keep the bugs off) in hand. Julia was known for her skill not only as a midwife but also in healing. Adam and Julia taught much of what they knew to both Alexis and Victoria. They too became known for healing, Victoria particularly with women and with heart disease. Alexis made his living in Ft. Vermillion through a mixture of trapping and farming. As Alexis traveled to new areas for trapping, including the northeastern parts of British Columbia, his reputation as a healer became known. Later when he lived at Gravel Point on the river below Ft. Smith, people came from northern British Columbia, northern Alberta and from the communities around Great Slave Lake to ask for his help.

When Arthur was nine, the family traveled down the Peace and the Slave Rivers to Smith in a large scow with a tent covering. Victoria and Alexis's older children were growing up. Some of the girls were already married and as for Arthur's older brothers Paul and Harry, instead of dependably being there to take care of the animals while Alexis was away trapping, well their minds seemed to be on girls and dances. Still, what finally pushed them on was having the land Alexis and his brother Pierre had cleared and lived on without title bought out from under them by Mennonites looking for, in this case, ready made farmland (Ft. Vermillion, 1992). Besides it would be better for trapping further north. As a descendent of old Francois Beaulieu, and the grandson of Joseph King Beaulieu and son of Paul King Beaulieu, Alexis had family roots in Salt River. With all their belongings, their cows and six horses on the boat it was quite a journey. However, it was one which Alexis had traveled before. His own father Paul King had taken the same trip downriver with his family. Arthur remembers there were people fishing and hunting, living all down the Peace/Slave waterway and every night they stopped with someone. In one place there were so many people they had a dance.

Maria Brown, living in Ft. Fitzgerald as a girl at the time, remembers the excitement in Fitz. when they heard from faster travelers that, "The Beaulieus are coming." When they finally arrived, people came down to the landing bringing them bannock and meat. And naturally at Fitz., where any occasion was a good time for a dance, a dance was held that night. Maria still remembers being fascinated when Arthur's older brother and sister, Harry and Agnes, demonstrated the latest dance from Ft. Vermillion — the Charleston.

Alexis picked up work in the transportation system, used his horses for hauling freight or building roads, and trapped again in the winter. A marriage was arranged for Agnes to Magloire Beaver, a Cree man whose wife and four baby sons had all died one by one, leaving only a little daughter, Therese. He was a good man, strong, a fast runner, a good trapper and hunter, a drummer and singer, and Alexis believed Magloire would make a good husband for Agnes. The older boys began working a mixture of jobs that garnered them the reputation as the "Beaulieu boys" who'd work at anything. Arthur went to school for a few years at the little old school near where the drugstore and the library are now. But the summer Arthur was thirteen his mother died and things changed.

Victoria had been out picking raspberries at their place at Gravel Point. Hearing his mother scream, Arthur came running, gun in hand. A large bear was standing there, up on his hind legs. Acting quickly, Arthur shot him twice in the chest. His father came running up but by then the bear had already run off. Later Arthur and his father tracked the bear eventually finding it dead in the bush. Victoria seemed all right, nothing seemed unusual, she was cooking and everything. They decided to take a break and go into town for a little while, camping down by the river as many people did in those days. On the day they were to return home they were having lunch in their tent, a guest was with them, and they were eating at the clean oil cloth Victoria had spread on the ground. Suddenly Victoria keeled over. Their guest ran up the hill to the hospital. With no road down to where they were camped, the boys carried her to where they could meet the road and they put her in a panel truck. It was a holiday and the front of the hospital was locked. Arthur remembers they took her around and carried her up the back stairs. The doctor pronounced her dead of heart failure.

That summer Arthur, had been working at his first job for the M Transportation Company. He asked Father Mansoz, an Oblate priest of the old style with a long white beard, to order a cross for him from Edmonton. It cost seventy five dollars and he contributed all the money he made. The next summer a beautiful tombstone, fancier than others seen in Smith before, came in on a barge and Oliver Tatson, who worked for the church, helped him put it up. Today the cross is broken and the top lying on the ground beside it. "Kids!" he says.

This story intersects with others, as they often do. Stories and even dreams are connected with each other. Louis Beaver also told me about his memories of his grandmother, Victoria's death. And Raymond Beaver told the story of his father Magloire's strange experience with a bear he had trapped up river from his in-laws a day or two earlier. Magloire believed that the bear's strange cry was a premonition that something bad would happen, followed by Victoria's death. Magloire's story was also connected to Rosa Mercredi's story as it involved Magloire, her father and the death of two siblings following a similar incident with a trapped bear earlier that summer. Each story is connected in a vision of personal history as part of interconnected causal history. Reciprocity and connectedness occur in the interacting impact of each other's stories making the story whole, a whole way of life.

In the following narrative, Arthur stresses that his grandfather, Paul King Beaulieu (1850-1949), *knew something*. That despite being a Frenchman or Métis, he could dream ahead in ways that were vital and powerful. He validates the truth and source of the story by referencing his father's having been present as a boy and telling us that he, himself, in later years had seen the tea kettle mentioned. The story starts with Arthur's father, Alexis, but quickly switches to telling his grandfather, Paul King's story. Sorting out the relationships is important as is seen in the emphasis on Paul King's relationship to Daniel Tatadise, his second wife Elizabeth's brother. Daniel was known as "A Thousand Skins" for his trapping success and his power for trapping. This family was Dene (Slavey) rather than Métis as Paul King's first wife and Alexis' mother had been. Arthur stresses this distinction in referring later to her, his grandmother, the daughter of a prominent Métis family, as "That's a Lafferty woman, that one." I have heard Arthur tell this story several times and the version I have presented here is a composite. At each telling Arthur's voice gets quiet with mounting tension and his shoulders hunch over as if he is one of the men sitting in the teepee waiting during the central moments. Then sitting up, laughing, he recounts the amazement of the wonderful ending, followed by closing down with a matter of fact summation as is similar to accounts of other regional story tellers (Blondin, 1990, 1997; Goulet, 1998; Li and Scollon, 1976; Ridington, 1988, 1990).

Paul King and the Seven Heads

One time, my dad, he wasn't very big I guess.
People used to stay all over the place that time.
He was staying with his brother-in-law.
That's the one with a thousand skins,
What they called his brother in-law.
It's A Thousand Skins that's Paul King's brother-in-law, that one.
That's the one married to Thousand Skins' sister.
That's the one there, second wife he had, that's Thousand Skins' sister.

Now, no meat now. Everybody's hunting,

Never killed *nothing*, not much rabbit too.
Not much flour they got now.
That Daniel, that Thousand Skins,
He told his wife to cook all that bannock.
Cook everything and bring everybody in there.
Tea, they got a lot of tea. Got some tea.
Sugar, I guess they have sugar.
And last little flour they have, about this much, not very much.
Them womans make bannock with that.
They call everybody in, my grandfather too, Paul.
So they went in that teepee now, big teepee.
Everybody now drinking tea, sugar,
Piece of bannock, not very big I guess.

He told my grandfather, he told Paul King,
"You're a Frenchman," he said.
"But I want you to go and *dream ahead*
 about how we're going to make out".
Small little tea kettle he said, about this big.
I seen him with that one too.
"Make tea there and I'll go to sleep.
When I'm sleeping, you make that tea.
When that thing boiling, you put tea.
And when you cook it and you put it in the ground,
 you wake me up." he told that, his brother in law.
It was A Thousand Skins he told that.
And he went to sleep them guys sitting down, that teepee.
That time just teepee, no tents or nothing, no horses
Now everybody just sat up and stay quiet now.

So now, not long that tea kettle, now, well that tea boil.
Better put that tea in, wake up my grandfather now.
"Here's your tea," he told him.
He put it in a cup now. They put it in a cup now.
I guess now when he got up, tea there.
So now, now they have a smoke now, pipes they smoke it.
That pipe it's not this kind of pipe, big one

They told that guys brother in law, now that's Paul King.
And they used to call him Frenchman. And this guy says now,
"Now what did you dream, this Frenchman?
 Are we going to have something to eat?" cause they have nothing.
They said "What you seen?"
"*Machi*. *Machi*, go for hunt.
They give us seven heads, as soon as the daylight."
"You know what, *nistaway* (brother-in-law) told me?" he says.

"There's seven heads over there for us!"
Oh boy, everybody's happy, he said, my dad.

Oh boy, nobody sleep.
It's just getting a little daylight,
Already the chief is yelling at them guys not to hunt.
Just as soon as it's daylight everybody took off.
Boy, you can hear them shooting over here and over there.
Soon enough they have seven moose.
Before even the sun come up, already
Everybody's packing meat and everything.
Just close together like that, they kill seven moose.
Everybody survive from there.

This story embodies the wisdom and knowing required to ensure that strategies such as dreaming ahead were available when needed. This source of knowledge was then available to make decisions not about ordinary events but in times of exceptional circumstances. What is also important is the ability to handle time and space in a nonlinear fashion. In this case Paul King is told and can see ahead what will happen the next morning. As in another narrative Arthur told, *Pieface's Grandfather's Drum*, an object, a drum stick, is gathered from a relative who lived long before, time is not irretrievable or impenetrable. Similarly, a more current account told by another descendent of the Paul King, Raymond Beaver, tells of a dream foreshadowing the events of the coming day. In this case a dream of two white men dressed all in white foreshadows the two white swans who flew so low over his canoe the next morning, that he could have touched them with his paddle. Immediately remembering the dream, he turned and as the river carried him around the bend a moose stands waiting, a gift from the two swans. As discussed previously, Marlene Brandt Castellano (2000) terms this form of knowledge as *revealed knowledge*. It is real, it is truthful and decisions can be made based on this knowledge.

Arthur's uses culturally based narration strategies introducing the story, time, place, and teller (source of validation) and closes with a succinct conclusion, "everybody survive from there." This form of conclusion is different in form than Western narratives which typically reemphasize the explanation, point, or lesson of the story. In this narrative form the ending is just that, the ending. The message is to be taken from within the story and from thinking about it as one experiences life. That is not to say that "everybody survives" is not the point of the story, it is. The teaching (rather than point) is found in cultural context. Thus how and in what form the story takes leading to this conclusion are culturally based and understood within the context of the story and the other connected stories one knows. The same strategies are used in other stories Arthur told and in many of Frank Laviolette's stories as well.

Arthur also shared an account of a Cree shaky tent ceremony which he witnessed as a youth. Arthur emphasizes the smallness of the willow framed tent and its door flap, the sounds of the animals, and the role of the turtle as facilitator. Going on he describes it, "One guy now has a drum, one guy that's supposed to go in and sing. You don't *even* see him . . . it's just like a wind (going in)." A rattle is thrown in and you can hear it hitting the poles then, "This guy now, this guy goes in now, all *kinds* of animals I heard." The voice of the turtle is heard most often, "that's the one that talks all kinds of language." The turtle asks people what they want to know and then, "Turtle'll go find out right away. Not even twenty minutes and he'll be, he'll come back and tell you what you want to know." It was evident that what he had seen and heard still impressed him.

The shaky tent tradition is an important component of knowing and seeing across time and space in the tradition of Cree and other Algonquian peoples. This tradition has been written about by anthropologists working with Cree and other Algonquian peoples across Canada (Brightman, 1993; Feit, 1994, 1997; Hallowell, 1942, 1992; Preston, 2002), in the historical accounts of fur traders (Brown and Brightman, 1988), and in oral history collections (Kulchyski et al, 1999; Stevens, 1971). Importantly, animal helpers are seen to run the process with the participant being more of a host or energy conduit. Frequently, as in Arthur's story, the Turtle, who speaks many languages, is the mediator between animal and human personalities. In Eastern Cree accounts it is one's *mistapeo* or the animal helper of the medicine man who enters the shaky tent first and takes a primary role (Feit, 1994, 1997; Preston, 2002). Notable also for the humourous digs at the performer or even at themselves or the audience made by the animal guests, attending is often quite entertaining and congenial despite the exciting, strangeness of the actual phenomena (Brown and

Brightman, 1988; Feit, 1994, 1997). As Bird-David notes, it is important for children to learn not only what ceremonies can accomplish but also the personalities of and possible relationships to the beings involved (Bird-David, 2004). Shaky tent ceremonies were known to be held occasionally by a Cree practitioner in Ft. Smith, as mentioned by Arthur and Frank Laviolette and in an account by anthropologist Dave Smith (Dreidger, 1989).

As Dave Smith (2002) notes in terms of stories told in nearby Ft. Resolution, these stories as gifts are as valuable and energy sustaining as the animal's gift of meat. As Arthur connects it they *are* meat in some ways. And further if you don't live this way, well you become dead meat, just chicken (grouse) meat, sitting there doing nothing. In the case of reciprocity amongst community members often you receive what you need from stories when you need it, not necessarily immediately. And as we end our interviews Arthur reminds me that things are different now, there aren't as many people to learn from about how they used to do things, "Oh boy, there's a lot of things that they *know* a long time ago. They know about medicine and all that. Nowadays a person can't do nothing, they'll *starve*." Arthur believes now it is better to tell people so that the knowledge doesn't die, and he reminds me there is a lot more to tell.

Emilia Gratrix (Mercredi, Whitford), April 1, 1917-2005

At eighty-seven, Métis Elder, Emilia Gratrix (Mercredi) was the oldest person interviewed. No matter her age, she was one of the most lively, living life as fully as possible in often challenging circumstances, and still living in her own home when she was interviewed. Emilia spoke with pride of her background as a Métis, as an Aboriginal woman. She vividly described both of her grandfathers who each had differing lifestyles representative of the times. On her mothers' side, her grandfather was a Tourangeau (Métis) who, adopted by Cree people following the death of his parents, remembered being with a lot of people at Qu'appelle, Saskatchewan as a child (possibly the signing of Treaty 4). After his wife's death, he left his daughter, Elizabeth, at the convent in St. Albert, Alberta. He traveled north, working on the boats, and then ended up living in Ft. Simpson. Emilia also described him as a medicine man. Elizabeth traveled north to Ft. Chipewyan at seventeen with two Sisters (Grey Nuns) who were being transferred north hoping to find her father, instead she found herself married.

On her father Isidore Mercredi's side, Emilia's grandfather, was the successful chief trader, Pierre Mercredi, a stalwart of the Hudson's Bay Company. He started out as a tripper going out to the bush camps to get furs from the people directly. He was also an interpreter, including translating for the Treaty 8 party (he later described the final written version as not what he'd translated), and then, for many years he was a respected HBC chief trader in Ft. Resolution, before finally retiring to Ft. Chipewyan. Isidore's mother Marie, was a Métis, a Beaulieu who Emilia described as having Iroquois heritage as well (Iroquois boatmen). Marie Beaulieu, the granddaughter of the Métis patriarch, Francois Beaulieu II, was a woman respected by and able to interact with anyone. Proud of her family and Métis background, Emilia was not impressed with those Métis women who she describes as "marrying in" in order to obtain Treaty (benefits) in earlier years. Nor is she impressed with those returning to treaty status following the passage of Bill C-31. Nevertheless, Emilia notes however that she's related to "a good half of the town" Métis or not.

> We are one big family we come from the same family tree but different branches. Like the Beaulieus and the Beaver family they are related to us and some are just related, I can't say how they're related, like Frank Laviolette, I am related to him (Arctic College, n.d.).

Another important aspect of Emilia's identity was her pride in being different, in judging people for who they are not what they are, on being strong despite all kinds of hardships and on doing the best she can while not worrying about what other people think about her. The following two "I poems," referring to raising six children as a single parent at a time when "marriage was the style" illustrates this richly.

Nothing to Hide

Yeah, I know…
I think I *know*.
I been here since 1917.
So that's an awful long time.

I've got nothing to hide.
I don't care who knows it.
I had a lot of boyfriends,
And children from them too.

I did what's God's will.
I wouldn't have had them,
If God didn't want me to.
But somehow he trusted me.

And I brought them up strict.
"Don't do what I did.
Do what I tell you!"
I did my best for them . . .

One Thing About Me

One thing about me,
I call things by their right names.
I don't lie.
I just come out with the truth.

And I never stole a drink of water in my life.
I just ask for something.
If they won't give it or don't have it,
I just won't get it, that's all.

I was *very* dirt poor.
I had to raise kids
I had no money.
I never went to nobody.

Emilia responds to my question about the history of the community with three major topics: the river and the transport, the army and WWII, the RC mission and her family's and the Métis people's role in it all. Starting with, "Anyway, if you want to know about Ft. Smith," then the story of Ft. Smith history is that of the boats, the portage, the river, and the fur trade as her relatives experienced it. Her mother, Elizabeth, often spoke of her first trip over the wet, rough portage road following her trip by steamboat from Ft. Chipewyan, where she'd spent the previous winter, to Ft. Fitzgerald in 1908. Sixteen miles long it was rough going; the first half was built through sloughs and wetlands; the second half though sand and dust. Given the amount of goods that could be carried by the new steamers, the old Mountain Portage York boat route through the rapids was abandoned by the bigger interests. The HBC and the RC Mission and later the Northern Traders (NT) now had steamboats waiting at either end of this new route from Fitz. to Smith. Emilia's father, Isidore Mercredi, hauled freight across the portage with horse teams. Isidore, and later Emilia's older brother Eugene, also ran dog teams with the mail south to Fort McMurray in the winter. Eugene and four other young men eventually went to war. They were gone from home for five years during WWII. Her sister Seraphine's husband, John Evans, worked on transport on the portage until it pretty much shut down following the building of a road north through Hay River in the 1960's, thus bypassing the rapids once and for all.

Reminiscing about the Ryan Brothers and their teamsters (Trantner, 1946), the major freighting outfit prewar, Emilia recalls we used to have "what we called the Blue Line (Ryan's) and the Red Line because of the color of their trucks on the portage and a big stop at Halfway House." The competition was so fierce the Ryan brothers and the Blue Line built parallel roads to the left and right of where the current road from Fitz. to Smith is located. When Emilia's mother Elizabeth first went across the portage in 1908, "She heard swearing all the way, a convent girl listening to all that!" When older people, as they often do, refer to "convent girls," they mean sheltered, brought up religiously to sew and work hard, making a good, clean, and Catholic household with lots of children. This reminded her of the missionaries, and Emilia goes on to say how they crossed over "that big mountain" (Mountain Portage) in 1867 with the first Sisters (Grey Nuns) headed for Ft. Providence pushing the boat across the portage on the rollers with the men. "Oh God, they must have loved God for that!"

And Emilia saw the convent and school built for these Grey Nuns later when, in 1928 at age eleven, she traveled down the river past Ft. Providence to Ft. Norman along with her young aunt. The trip was fun at first, although she recalls her aunt flirted with the Mounties on board the whole trip, but they brought flu with them. When they got to Ft. Norman,

> my uncle and whole families got sick. And I used to help look after them . . . vomiting with it, fever, diarrhea, the whole bit. And me a little kid had to help clean up that mess. And when I left there my uncle gave me a present, he gave me ten dollars. That's big money in them days.

While she didn't get the flu, when she got back home her tonsils were inflamed. Luckily a doctor from Edmonton was in: "He came here and pulled all the tonsils in Ft. Smith including mine." He also pulled lots of teeth. Many people recall these dental visits well into the 1950s: the children were all lined up and any teeth with cavities simply pulled out, no filling done.

Emilia's father, Isidore Mercredi (1884) grew up in Ft. Chipewyan, attending school at the Mission school, where he learned to be a carpenter. He first worked in Ft. Resolution building the convent and residential school. Isidore also helped build the first hospital and other Roman Catholic mission buildings in Ft. Smith (Borean, 1960). He worked for a time for the RCMP, including guiding a winter trip to Edmonton in 1904 by dog team. Aside from carpentry work, Isidore worked hauling freight, hauling and supplying water, cutting wood, and later on as the undertaker. The family stayed at Salt River for a short attempt at farming. When the soil proved too salty, they moved in to Smith in 1921, returning to Salt River for the fish runs in the spring along with many other families. Emilia remembers this as a good time.

> In the spring, fish is what we call running, they go upstream and people from here used to go down to cut fish. Lots and lots of families. We needed that fish for dogs in the summer time. I remember the fish was good, not only dogs could eat it, people used to hang fish on what they called a stage, a thing made out of poles and they used to smoke the fish and us kids used to go there and eat all the fat (Arctic College, n.d.).

In Ft. Smith, Isidore had cattle and sold milk. He had large vegetable gardens, often growing potatoes to sell to the Hudson's Bay Company (eventually up to 1 000 sacks per year), with the kids doing a lot of the weeding — even, as her sister Seraphine recalls, on July 1st (Dominion Day) (Evans, 1993). When asked what her chores were Emilia remarked to an earlier interviewer that if she was to answer that, "you'll be here all night!" Emilia's older brother Rene recalls being shocked at the amount of work he was put to when he returned to his parents' home at age thirteen after growing up with his grandparents. In Ft. Resolution, where his grandfather, Pierre Mercredi, was the chief Hudson's Bay Company trader, the hired hands did most of the work. Realizing Rene would have to learn to work, Pierre sent him home to Isidore whose motto was, "Never loose a day, that day is gone" (Mercredi, 1977).

That meant that, except for the year she spent with Pierre and Marie in Ft. Resolution, Emilia got up early with the men and helped to feed and water the cattle before school. She remembers, though, the beauty of the bright stars just before daybreak. With Isidore's convent education there were no cards or other games played at home; Isidore didn't believe in it. He believed in stressing not only hard work but religion to his children, as did his wife. As Emilia recalls, "They stuffed that in to my eyebrows!" Raised in a convent, Elizabeth also believed in working hard. She not only raised her children but she also did laundry for the steamboats and the hotel. Elizabeth, however, also believed in having fun. Even though Isidore didn't dance, Elizabeth loved dances. When, sadly, she no longer felt able to dance following her daughter Leonie Kennedy's death, the oldest of her seven children, she turned to playing bingo instead (Métis, 1977).

Emilia worked very hard, raising her children alone under difficult conditions, but she definitely believed in having fun and she did, particularly during the period when the US army and the 388th Engineers (Separate) were in town. The 388th was an American segregated unit with white officers coming from Camp Claiborne, Louisiana (Dolan, 1998). They were there to transport 55, 000 tons of pipe and equipment across the portage heading towards the Norman Wells Oilfields. Once they were in Norman Wells, they were to build a pipeline to Whitehorse for oil needed for the Pacific front in light of a possible invasion of Alaska by the Japanese. While the project turned out to be a major boondoggle for the military, it had a significant impact on many northern communities including the new technology brought in, the money to be made, and most importantly the close to two thousand men attached to the project. In Ft. Smith, along with the 89'th Canadian (Army), the 388th Engineers built a new and vastly improved road between Ft. Fitzgerald and Ft. Smith and a new airfield. For Emilia, then in her mid-twenties, and an attractive woman with a vibrant personality, the experience was never to be forgotten.

You see . . . the army changed the town a lot.
One minute you could hear a pin drop, it's so quiet.
You could hear those frogs out there in the wetlands, singing their sing-songs.
And the next day, a big racket going on there!
Army personnel!

And we had ... we had never seen a bunch of black people.

We saw one, one time, Jackson.
The fellow was here shortly, but then he moved north.
That's the only black man I remember.
Then a whole bunch of them!

I was the first woman that went and talked to them.
Me, I'm nosy I am . . .
I liked them very much.
I was a Creole, they said.
I sure missed them when they left

Emilia remembered the names of all the units and companies stationed in Ft. Smith, the names of the MP's who often stopped in for a visit at her father's place and the eight or nine children that were born to local women, including herself. Apparently, "the black guys were more fun, they had most of the girls and the white guys the leftovers." Pete Fraser from Ft. Chipewyan who ended up working with them all the way to Norman Wells recalled that:

> Actually they (the Black soldiers) got along well with the people up here. I don't think it was because of the colour, but it was just because people felt sorry for them — the way they were treated. So they took them in, rather than the white soldiers. We thought they were good people." (Fraser in Dolan, 1998, p. 258)

Emilia, being Emilia, put it more strongly, "We finally found somebody we could relate to because we are the Blacks of Canada, they are the Blacks of the United States. We're treated the same way" (Arctic College, n.d.).

The soldiers, many from Louisiana and Mississippi, identified her with her French language, not as a "half breed" but as a desirable Creole. And the men spent money freely not only at the dances and on their girlfriends, but also on crafts and souvenirs to send back home. They could "eat steady" buying all the bread, pies, and cakes that the women could bake. Emilia and her mother also made money doing their laundry. As well, "there were poker games, black jack games all over the place. The houses would get a cut off of it. Like there was so much for the house and the rest was divided between the guys who were winning." But it wasn't all fun; Emilia just escaped an assault by a man with a knife; he ended up in the military prison in Ft.

Leavenworth, Kansas. And then it ended, the men and all the money were gone, the transportation improvements and the babies remained and the community, for better or worse, was changed.

Emilia grew up speaking Michif, a Métis version of French. While both her parents spoke French and Cree and her father Chipewyan, they told the children, "'You're Métis, you're not an Indian, you talk French!' And so we talked French, that's the Métis language, French." However, Emilia was careful to learn enough Cree that she could tell what her parents were talking about when they didn't want the children to understand. In later years she was active in Métis organizations and political development, attending meetings not only in Hay River where she lived at the time but also across Canada. Emilia felt proud that she was one of the first to receive the "Order of the Shawl," given as an honour to northern Métis women. She took seriously attending Métis meetings, handing out both advice and jokes to the younger leaders, and enjoyed Elders' gatherings and social activities for seniors to the end of her life.

Emilia held a high regard for the many Sisters who came to the community over the years. The Grey Nuns, who worked for the Mackenzie diocese, were headquartered in the community. She recalls only one "rotten apple", a teacher, who she really disliked and believes these women should be better recognized for their sacrifices and contributions. Still fuming about it, Emilia says that naming the new personal carefacility, the "Northern Lights Home" was a stupid idea. Instead it should have been named after someone who really helped the people, like Sister Fortin, one of the first nurses in the hospital. Sister Fortin

> went to houses, cleaned up after someone dies in your house, as at that time most of them did, washed the blankets and hung them out, comforts the family, sees that the proper arrangements are made for the burial and all that. Sister Fortin stayed up all night, in the middle of the night delivering a baby and has to be in church at six o'clock in the morning. Well, good Lord she earned her heaven at least a thousand times when she was here . . . They sent her out, she was old, they sent her out . . .

Emilia disagreed with the practice of sending the Sisters (Grey Nuns) "out" to retire, when they could no longer work; most of them had spent their entire adult lives in the north. The lack of control over their own lives, by these hard-working women, is something she felt was not only cruel but a misuse of the authority of the priests and bishops. The many lay brothers, for the most part, were remembered as "good, kindly, old brothers," especially the ones who came from France in the early years. And Emilia gratefully remembers the assistance she received from the Sisters when her children were ill. The kindness of a nun who served her tea and cookies on a tray with a doily on it and sat and talked with her when she was ill, no matter that she was a single parent, happy for her when she later married, was appreciated.

Remembering some of the priests she liked Emilia mentions the two American priests. They were Father Leising who became Bishop Breynat's pilot and who raised the money for the power plant, and Father Gillis, who after retiring to Washington, D.C. stayed in touch with some of the people including her sister-in law Rosa Mercredi. But she didn't take kindly to all the threats of damnation she received over the years, "well they had that over your head. You're going to go to Hell, you're going to go to Hell for this. You're going to go to Hell for that!" And then the priests had changed their Irish family name from McReady or McCarthy to Mercredi at some point in the nineteenth century, perhaps when her great grandfather, Joseph, was working for the church at Fond du Lac in the mid 1800's or before then in Red River and Green Lake, Saskatchewan. Referring to the allegations of sexual abuse in recent years, Emilia blames the newer priests, "young riff raff that came in later years," and the failure of the church to allow priests to marry. She recalls one boy who did tell and the impossibility for parents to believe such a thing given how the priests were respected. At that time, "If the priest said something you'd think Jesus was saying it." Noting that while they did both good and bad, Emilia remarks that unfortunately the priests often told you to do the wrong thing, particularly in regards to marriage and relationship issues.

For her, this meant that when she had a child as a teenager she was encouraged to marry as soon as she could. She ended up married to someone who she describes as "no good" and living together for only a short while before breaking up. Still resentful of the pressure put on her to marry him, a Whitford from Alberta, she was then stuck being married, although he soon went off to WWII. He wrote from England that he'd fallen in love there and wanted a divorce. Before he left, she lost a baby, holding her husband's failure to chop and carry wood and leaving her to do it responsible. Nevertheless, she was thankful she was pregnant again when he left as her only daughter came to her from the marriage. As a Catholic, divorce was a problem; there were no annulments then. Gun shy about marriage after this, she had other relationships and more children, but she didn't get married again until she'd been with John Gratrix, a white man, for six years. John and Emilia had a strong relationship, eventually marrying and living together for another twenty years before his death in 1982.

Narratives of the Beaulieu family, particularly of "that old Francois" or "old man Beaulieu," are common in Ft. Smith where ancestry in this family is common. Emilia's grandmother was a Beaulieu, bringing a tale of Francois's devilment and resistance, and, in contrast, his later reform and saintliness, constructed with varying emphasis over the years, depending on who was doing the telling. Especially significant in Emilia's telling is not only Francois's power and resistance but also how the church told his conversion story, by using it as an example in their schools. This practice of using Native conversion stories as models has a long history in the Catholic Church, most notably that of the Mohawk/Algonquin woman Kateri Tegakwitha (1656-1680). Kateri, who died from a fever following the practice of severe mortification, was beatified by the church in 1980 (Shoemaker, 1995; Steckley, 1999). In Ft. Smith, Beaulieu and his conversion was used in the church's narrative of transformation, in this case from great sinner to great saint.

> Old Man Beaulieu that's my great, great, great grandfather. I don't know how *great* he was but it's there. I guess he was all right. That's old Francois. He comes from France they tell me. He was a Frenchman. That's Marie Beaulieu's grandfather. Her father was . . . Antoine, I think . . . and Paul King Beaulieu, old patriarch Beaulieu, that's my grandmother's cousin. She [Marie], she was born in Salt River. That's from that Beaulieu family.

> And my grandpa (Old Man Beaulieu) he had *lots* of money. He sends his children to be educated in Winnipeg. That's the jump off spot for the north here. And the Hudson's Bay couldn't beat him at anything. So they hired him, made a deal with him . . . He's a tough old customer. He has seven wives, but what else do you expect he was French . . . and then when the priest came and talked to him about this deal, about the seven wives, he had to let them wives go because they said that was committing a sin by living with, you know, all those women. So he didn't take the one he loved.
>
> And the teachers in *school* (the Grey Nuns) tell us that story! He didn't take the one he really *loved*! He took the one that couldn't make a living for herself because she was sick. That's the one he lived with permanently after. And for *years* he repented his sins. He lived at Salt River and he died there. And he put a cross out in the bush somewhere and he went and pray at that cross all the time . . . They said there was even a path there through the bush, the way he used to go.

While Emilia, with some pride acknowledges herself as, like Beaulieu, a nonconformist spirit, she also took pride in the Mercredi's social position in the community, as one of the leading Métis families, remarking that "they were more prominent like." The Mercredis were people of the communities, working for the Bay or the church as traders, carpenters, and small businessmen in Ft. Chipewyan, Ft. Resolution, and Fort Smith. Her grandmother, Marie, was an interesting woman, someone who moved between the various social worlds of the time. As the wife of the "Hudson's Bay boss" Marie was "one of the *top* social ladies of the time . . . they mixed with white people. A lot of them white people, Doctor Bourget's (Indian Agent) wife and the French family, people like that. And we used to go and visit them." Pierre and Marie were also frequent visitors of the sisters and the priests. Many of Maries' Beaulieu relatives were also Métis but "those Beaulieus, some of them lived like Indian people do. They lived that way." This meant that Marie, who often went and picked berries, tapped birch syrup, or worked on moose hides with her cousins, "could fit in both, both worlds." Marie was truly a bicultural representative of the time. Given her background as a Beaulieu she could have married into relationships that defined her as solidly Metis, as she did, or taken a more "Native" direction.

Stressing various aspects of one's identity at different times had some benefit for community members over the years. However, we must also keep in mind that often one was not allowed a choice due to governmental or societal definitions of who one was, as a category or type of people. Payne (2001) observes in the context of recent studies of Métis people that "people's choices of identity are rarely simple or obvious: instead they can arise through the interaction of multiple factors including geography, historical experience, other people's perceptions, as well as self identification" (p. 6). This means that identity of Aboriginal peoples as based in legal and also social definitions has changed over the years, and the benefits or limits of each identity and responses to those dynamics have consequently changed as a result. In an effort to do the best for themselves, people's strategies of identity definition have been highly influenced by these factors. Choices regarding taking Treaty or scrip, re-defining oneself as Métis in relation to liquor and voting regulations in the first half of the twentieth century and the phenomena of a return to First Nations membership in light of Canadian Bill C-31 and land claims negotiations had to be made in varying social and political circumstances.

These factors are illustrated clearly in Frank Laviolette's case and the arbitrariness of legal identity is illustrated clearly in Maryanne MacDonald's father's choice to take scrip. In another case, while the people of Ft. Resolution wanted Paul Beaulieu as chief during the Treaty 8 negotiations in 1900, the priests' identification of him as Métis rather than Dene allowed the commissioners to rule him out, while in the previous year Alexandre Laviolette in Ft. Chipewyan, with a similar background, was acceptable as chief to the Treaty party (Fumoleau, 1974). For Emilia, however identity remained firm. She knew who she was and that she deserved the Métis shawl she received; only the names, not her identity, changing from half-breed or French to Métis during her lifetime.

Mary Heron (McNeil), 1928

Mary Heron, a Chipewyan Elder, is the granddaughter of Eleanor (Cayen) and Alexis Jeremie, both known for their healing and bush skills. After selling his furs to the highest bidder from amongst the five traders located at Ft Fitzgerald, Alexis often traveled to Ft. McMurray on the first boat of the year, buying a scow there and filling it with the goods they'd need at cheaper prices (McNeil, 1977). Alexis who trapped out of Fitzgerald was a leader. Keeping the graveyard neat was important to Alexis and he organized this activity while his wife fed the people afterwards. Alexis and Johnny Paulette organized moose hunts for the people especially when there was a large group in for Treaty Days (McNeil, 1977). Mary's mother, also Eleanor grew up, for the most part, in the bush. She was the only one of Alexis and Eleanor's eight children to survive. Mary's widowed aunt, her grandmother's sister, also lived with her sister, Mary's grandmother; a strong woman with her own trapping license, she was also one of Mary's teachers. Mary remembers her aunt's annoyance when an RCMP constable, who was stamping her furs, insisted on counting and recounting the furs despite her statement that there were only the fifteen beaver allowed and no matter how often he counted them he wasn't going to find anymore.

William McNeil, Mary's father, was a Moravian from Labrador and Dr. Grenfell's mission at St. Anthony in 1911. When he was seventeen he signed on as part of a failed economic development project which attempted to bring fifty reindeer to the Northwest Territories from Labrador with the idea of starting a herding business. Several of the reindeer died on the way. The remainder didn't handle the bugs well and gradually died off. The last one died in 1916 and that was the end of one of the stranger of the many economic development projects dreamed up in Ottawa. As Billy remarked as he ate the last of the caribou, "That was the most expensive steak I ever had." Known as a resourceful man, Billy was hired as a buffalo ranger for Wood Buffalo National Park, getting a raise in 1918 to $70 a month. Later he trapped with Eleanor's family and on his own with his son, Wilfrid, while operating a taxi in the summer. Eventually, Billy worked for the federal government's game branch handling their boats and other equipment. Mary's parents were married in 1924 when Eleanor, then eighteen, came into town from the bush for Christmas (Dec. 27, 1924). Billy brought a son, Wilfrid, from his first marriage to Pierre Squirrel's daughter with him.

When I went to see Mary, we sat at her kitchen table. Mary chain smoking as she always does, while checking me out and considering what she would give me. Mary first told me about herself. She talked about the hard year that she'd had due to the many deaths that had occurred including that of her partner of the last seven or eight years, a man she loved dearly. She had been with him later in life after her husband Leonard's death and raising eight children. One of her best friends, Bernice Daniels and her husband Buster, had just died from cancer within a month of each other. There were others too, like old Francois Laviolette, her friend Frank's older brother. Coping with this amount of grief, even for a strong woman, who is active and involved in many things to help others and the community, was very hard. She also felt discouraged with the many problems affecting the Salt River Band and the community at that time and had pulled in from her usual activities.

Soon she would have to move out of this house. It belonged to the town housing corporation and although the house was laden with memory and the accumulated goods that accompanied those memories, Mary was listed as "over-accommodated." The three bedroom house was meant for a family with young children and not for a senior, her adult son, and teenaged granddaughter. Mary would be given one of the small seniors units near to where the old hospital had just been torn down. "None of your children can live with you and no pets either," she said, looking at her little dog. And then, "My God, the dust there, it's all sand and no grass, I'll be sweeping constant!"

In recent years, Mary has regained the Treaty status she had lost through marriage to a local Métis, Len Heron, while her children chose to maintain their identity as Métis. Mary is a strong advocate for the importance of maintaining the Chipewyan language. Fortunate to have learned about the culture when she was young, given how fast things have changed since then, she wants to leave cultural knowledge for the youth, describing herself as like a university professor in this. Raising her children was difficult, constant work and her marriage faced many stresses. Despite everything, Mary was and is a strong and resourceful person. As you can see in the "I poem" made from Mary's words, Mary was strong in spirit even when she was young.

Mary

I had my own gun, a 22.
I was careful to do what Mushum taught me.
I killed my first chicken when I was ten.
I set my own fish nets then too.
I had my own dog team when I was twelve.
I got my first caribou when I was thirteen.
I didn't hunt moose, my brother did.
I sold my own rats.
I wasn't allowed any beaver, only the men.
I'd help skin and flesh them.
I got a two in one [rifle/shotgun] from my grandfather later . . .

She went on to speak about a time when caribou came into Fort Fitzgerald and how she ended up getting that gun. Mary also spoke about this in the NFB (National Film Board) film, *The Honour of the Crown* (2001), which portrays the complexities of the recent TLE (Treaty Land Entitlement) settlement:

> You should have seen the caribou out there. Right away I told my grandmother,
>
> "I'm gonna go." I grabbed this little rabbit gun and she said, "My poor granddaughter, you'll never get nothing with that gun." It was a 22 short we had. I wrapped on my snowshoes and away I went. But I did get a caribou. I came

> back and I got my grandmother and we went back and skinned it and cut the meat. She said, "We saved a thigh for when grandpa and your Dad and brother come back." And that was good. Well, my dad and my brother came back and we cooked the meat up, my first kill. Grandpa came back [from trapping] just before Christmas and he said, "That's for you." Here was a 22 special that he had bought for me. Oh, I was proud as a peacock. I thought, "Now I can really hunt!"

These accounts could be interpreted in feminist terms but that would be too simplistic. Women were strong but so were men. They all worked hard but they had fun too. And Mary had fun as a girl. She remembers playing hide and seek with many of the other now older people, including Arthur Beaulieu and his brother Freddy, although they only spoke Cree at first. Arthur's older sister Agnes and her husband Magloire Beaver were her godparents. Your godparents would take you in if your own parents died, as Mary explains, making her like a relative to Arthur, a sister to Louis, Raymond and the other Beaver children.

When asked about the history of the people and the community, Mary chose to tell about the way they lived when she was a young girl and what they did throughout the course of the year, as did two of the other interviewees. Presenting history as tied to the yearly cycle rather than as a progression starting from birth is common with subarctic peoples. History occurs, then, in both the repeated patterns and the transmission of knowledge required for making a living. Living part of the year with her grandparents and her great aunt and learning from them remains important to Mary's identity. She stressed the way they lived and the knowledge they held.

And It Was a Good Life

When Mary and her older brother Wilfrid were young they went to school for just a few weeks a year in the fall. Recalling the first time she went, she remembers her father taking her to the public school, the Anglican school not the Catholic school. Although Mary's mother and her Chipewyan relatives were Catholics, her father was a Protestant. As Mary explained it to me:

> In those days the father had the say on the daughters and the mother on the sons. That was because if the father died the oldest son would take care of his mother and if the mother died the oldest girl would take care of her father.

The teacher, Miss Swain, was dressed in a tight fitting long sleeved black dress with her hair in a bun. After her father left her with Miss Swain, Mary "cried all the way to lunch time." School was over for Wilfrid and Mary by early October when they went out in the bush with their grandparents, taking their school books along with them.

Alexis Jeremie, Mary's grandfather, once trapped at Pine Lake and at Conibear Lake in what became Wood Buffalo National Park, but now Alexis had his main cabin at Green Lake, across the Slave River and east of Ft. Smith. It was a good cabin, big with two bedrooms; their other cabin at Peers Lake was smaller with only one bedroom. To get to Green Lake they left from Fitz., traveling up the Dog River and then over the twelve-mile portage to the Hanging Ice River. The dogs wore dog packs and Wilfred, Mary, and their grandparents carried things too. They didn't rush; they often camped halfway across the long portage for a day or two. The weather was often nice and in the fall rut, a good time to hunt moose. As they traveled Alexis usually got a moose.

> My grandfather shot the moose, cut its throat and bled it. They didn't hurry, they made a fire, put spruce boughs down, made a pot of tea. Even if the leaves were down and the ground seemed clean, they always put spruce boughs down and made sure everything was kept very clean. They cut it up there and made dry meat and fleshed and scraped the hide, then they tied the hide to a pole and put it up in the trees for later.

Mary stressed, as do others, how organized the old people were in how they did things and how cleanliness was emphasized. For example, at the cabin, she and her grandmother had special aprons used just for cleaning the floors. They used soap they had made themselves, making a harsher soap for rough cleaning and a milder soap for hand soap. The floors were scrubbed by hand every Wednesday and Saturday and the bedding aired every Saturday, even at the cabin, no matter how cold it was. Everything was done by routine. And everything had its own little bag to put it neatly away with.

When the family reached the Hanging Ice River they stopped at Little Rapids, caught and hung fish. Mary remembers helping to get the little willow sticks that were used to hang the fish, five fish to a stick. A cache was made for the fish and it was covered and closed up with rocks ready for use later that winter. They would usually get another moose as they headed upstream to the cabin, being careful never to pack the meat with the dogs, instead keeping it clean by packing it out themselves. In this way the family had a good start on the food supply needed for the winter.

When they got to the camp it was just about freeze-up. It was a busy time getting ducks before they left for the south, cleaning up around the camp, and setting rabbit snares. As getting as much done before freeze-up was a priority, the ducks were not plucked right then. Instead as Mary describes, "we just cut a slit down the middle and put salt inside it. Then we tied them together by the legs and threw them over the beam in the shed." Once the ice was thick enough, the fish nets were set as a large supply of fish was needed to feed the dogs. Soon after that her grandfather began trapping.

At Christmas time all the trappers came into town. This was one of the most special times of the year. All the people went to Midnight Mass and the trappers donated some of the money they'd received from their trapping. During the service the priest announced the names of the big contributors and how much they'd given. On Christmas day, "You'd have turkey or if you couldn't you'd have the best meat you had, like caribou tongues, brisket, fried back strap and potatoes." The ingredients for the Christmas cake were bought in the fall and baked while they were in the bush by Dora Tourangeau, all ready for Christmas. And the house in town had been left in perfect condition for when they came back in from the bush. On New Years day people went from house to house to greet people. At "*every* home you went to there would be food on the table with pudding, bannock, dry meat with grease, boiled meats and tongue, all covered with tea towels, ready for the people."

After New Year's, the trappers went back out to the bush and stayed there all winter. Fifteen beavers were allowed at that time. In the winter they were trapped under the ice and in the spring hunt they were shot in the water or around the lodge. With only fifteen beaver allowed, they tried to get the bigger ones as you could get more for them. If Easter was early they often went in to town for Easter; if it was late they usually just waited to return to town until after the spring hunt when the season closed for beaver and rats and the ice went out, allowing for travel by water. When they came back many families went out to Salt River for fish runs in June. After the trappers sold their furs in town they stocked up right away with all the supplies they would need for the coming season, buying pails of lard and sacks of flour, tea, and baking powder. Then with what was left they might buy material to make clothes. Mary spent the summers in town helping with her family's big gardens and feeding and watering the dogs twice a day. They also gathered berries for the winter in late summer and September something she also enjoyed doing with her own children.

The values her grandparents held were important to Mary throughout her own life. She has tried to be positive, to work hard and to be accepting and not judge others for being different. Laughing, she remembers her grandmother telling her not to think of herself as better than anyone else, reminding her "It could be the ugliest guy, you don't say no. You don't know what's in his heart so don't judge by his looks." It was important also to spend time with older people. Mary remembers when she was young how her mother always sent her to bring little things to old Chief Squirrel, hospitalized in his last years after a fall from a wagon. Now she realizes her mother was hoping something would rub off.

When Mary turned eighteen her grandmother, who was both strongly Catholic and a strong healer, spoke to her, "Oh my girl, I don't like to interfere but it hurts me all this time that you are an Anglican," so Mary converted to Catholicism. She remembers the Bishops' visits to pick up the orphans for school. He wore a fuchsia outfit and had a pink stone. The people would go down to see him and kneel down and kiss the stone. Today she sees both the good and the bad things done by the Church, mentioning the social pressure felt in the announcement of the amount of the trappers Christmas donations at Midnight Mass and the priests' assumption of authority over the people. However, she also notes that she was glad when her children were growing up in the fifties that the many recreational activities organized by the church were available.

For Mary, contributing to the education of the community's grandchildren is what is important now. To honour this goal, I put Mary's story of her grandmothers' loving care for her and use of traditional remedies and teaching methods into a text to be used with young children. The story reflects Mary's depiction of the relationships involved, methods of acquiring traditional knowledge, and acknowledgement of her grandmother's substantial knowledge of healing. Interestingly, despite being Chipewyan, the Cree words for grandfather, *Mushum,* and grandmother, *Kookum*, were and are used as generic terms in this region.

Kookum and the Medicine Vest

Mary liked helping Mushum feed
 the dogs the fish they'd hung in the fall.
They barked and barked.
In the summer they barked
 when Mary fed them their porridge.
Washing their bowls afterwards
 was not something Mary liked to do.
But Mushum reminded her of how
 they helped bring in the wood,
 the wood they needed to keep warm.
"In the winter time they look after you,
 they pull hard for us.
Now *we* have to treat them good."

But today Mary was sick.
Today she didn't feel like laughing at the dogs,
Mary didn't feel well at all.
Mushum looked at her,
 he said he could take care of things.
His granddaughter should go see Kookum.
Heading for the cabin, Mary was glad.
Kookum would know what to do.
She could take care of almost anything.
Mary watched her as she worked.
Now she was learning too.

Kookum looked at Mary
She felt the sweat on her face,
She saw the red in her cheek, and
 she heard the sound in her chest.
Kookum went to the cupboard

That Mushum had built for her.
She knew just what to do.

Kookum took down the flannel vest
  pulling it out of its own special bag.
Mary smelled the wind and the sun.
But first, first was the liniment;
Smelly liniment rubbed on her chest.
Pulling on the vest, the muskrat fur
  Kookum had sewn in the middle
  felt soft against Mary's chest.
The special vest held tight the medicine
That she and Kookum had picked last summer,
  just before the cranberries were ripe.
Kookum reminded her now of each plants name.

Mary was hot, now she was sweating lots!
"Oh, my girl," Kookum said,
  as she washed Mary's face.
"Oh, that is good."
Mary was tired, time to sleep now.
Stretching her arms up high,
Kookum pulled off the vest.
"Look at all the sweat that
  you gave that old muskrat!"

The next day, Mary peeked out the cabin window
There was Kookum,
Hanging out the flannelette vest
  in the wind and the sun,
  Kookum knew just what to do.
Now Mary did too.

"Modern medicine" is also important in Mary's personal story, particularly in regards to her experience of TB, including six months of hospitalization at the Eberheart Hospital in Edmonton in 1960. How she negotiated the challenges of this period, with children still at home, also illustrates her strength and resourcefulness, a central narrative of her adult life which ties her to her to strong Chipewyan role models, her grandmother and auntie, as does her own experience of helping others.

Louis Beaver, 1936

Louis is a Cree speaker, and while we spoke easily together, he was the one participant who I thought I would have gotten a better interview with in his own language. Louis's Cree style of speaking and accent remain in his English. While quite interested in speaking to me, Louis did not want to be tape recorded. He said doing so made him talk too fast and he would not have time to think about what he wanted to say. Instead, he wanted me to take notes while he spoke, so I did. Thus Louis maintained his own speech style by refusing the technology that went with English and which made him think in a foreign manner. Truth was very important to Louis, especially concerning his father's stories and he was careful to validate what he was saying. For Louis the best times in his life were with his father and in many ways it is Magloire's experience that makes for history for him.

Louis Beaver almost died this last summer (2004). His one remaining lung congested and apparently on the wrong medicine, his family was prepared by local hospital staff for his imminent death. However, they asked that Louis be med-evaced and sent to the hospital in Yellowknife where he recovered quickly. Louis almost died once before. That time he was sent out to Edmonton and the Charles Camsell Hospital where so many northern patients who had TB went. Louis' younger brother, Raymond, remembers the difficult trip back in to Ft. Smith from their trap line they made that spring. Along with their father, they walked in, through wet ground, from their camp on the Hanging Ice River to Ft. Smith. They had to stop frequently to let Louis, who was coughing up blood, rest. His mother, Agnes, seeing the condition of her oldest son, who could now barely move, was very worried. Her own mother Victoria Beaulieu (Cardinal) had cured Agnes's younger brother Freddy from TB, but she had died suddenly over fifteen years earlier; now they had to rely on the Grey Nuns for help. Coming to see how Louis was, old man Cardinal told Agnes not to worry, that he would visit Louis and help him get better. He visited him later at the hospital in Ft. Smith and again at the Camsell in Edmonton.

Following this experience with TB, Louis had to watch his activity level. Frustrated with this, and with the change in the fur trade way of life, Louis has struggled periodically with alcohol, which makes some medical staff less sympathetic to his condition. In many ways, Louis continues to live in the moment in time when he was displaced, which made the material he wanted to share — what his father taught him —very rich. Louis, although the youngest of the people interviewed, holds a highly traditional mode of representation based in the grammar and phrasing of the Cree language. He prepared for the interviews and thought seriously about what he wanted to tell me. When he speaks, it is often his father's words that are given to you, word for word. What his father Magloire (1898-1985) told him, showed him, he learned and remembers. In fact it is Magloire's story that Louis starts with after first placing himself in the context of his immediate family.

> I am the oldest of Magloire Beaver and Agnes Beaver's children. We lost the next one when he was eight or nine. He was named Alphonse after my father's brother. Then came Felix, he is now deceased, Maggie, Mary is now deceased, then Raymond, Emily, Henry, we lost one called Malcolm in here, then Michael, Nora, Edna, and James.
>
> My mother [Agnes Beaulieu] came here around 1932 from Ft. Vermillion. My dad was in Chipewyan after the First World War and lived there and married an Arcand girl. Earlier he and his younger brother traveled with an old man and his wife from Wabesca [Alberta] to Fort McMurray. They stayed with a Métis trader, Alexandre Desjarlais and his brother Harry. Magloire and Alphonse, their own father dead, learned to hunt and trap from

> Harry Desjarlais. [Alphonse stayed one winter and then went home to Wabesca where his mother Sophie and younger brothers and sisters were. He died recently (2003) at one hundred and four.]
>
> Later my father was working making scows for buffalo and loading them. He went along. They let the buffalo off at various places including Buffalo Landing. The old man, they left Wabesca with, built a scow at McMurray to go to Fort Chip. And Magloire helped build it and went along . . . He went north as his father had died. There was no work so he kept moving this way. When he came up this way it was for better trapping. First he trapped outside Ft. Chip then he kept moving up this way for better trapping. He got a license to trap in the NWT. First he trapped from Salt River. He crossed Salt River and had to go all the way past Little Buffalo. He went for spring hunt in the park [Wood Buffalo] and then into the NWT for the later spring hunt there.
>
> When he finished trapping in the park [WBNP] he trapped at Hanging Ice and further beyond there. You could get there by going past Grande de Tour and cross to a long slough between the Slave River and the Hanging Ice. He first traveled there with his family with him. He had his first wife, their daughter and his wife's younger sister, she is Fuzzy Marie's mother. He and his wife had four boys before but they had all died. Therese [daughter from first marriage] is three years older than Louis. They raised his wife's sister, Sophie Arcand, who's Fuzzy Marie's mother, when her mother died, until Magloire's wife died as well.

This introduction to Magloire's life hints at many issues, death, movement, linkage across distances, the impact of Wood Buffalo National Park and new restrictions on trapping, identity, and ways of learning and teaching. Magloire saw the early death of his father, then his first wife and in all, over the years, eight children. These deaths are representative of what other Aboriginal families have gone through in the twentieth century. For example, Mary Heron's grandmother lost all but one of eight children and Maria's former husband Louis Brown lost both his mother and father, two sisters and two brothers soon after the Treaty 11 party went through in 1921.

For Magloire, loosing his own father in early adolescence meant he needed to find a way of making a living and find others to teach him. Magloire often recalled his relationship with an old Plains Cree man, who had come to Wabasca from further south, telling Magloire about his experience of being separated from his friends while scouting Blackfoot warriors — a story that Magloire then told his own children. Later, two descendents of the Desjarlais clan, a well-known fur trade family (Devine, 2004), offered him a place to stay and taught him more [later, Harry Desjarlais' son, Joe, moved to Ft. Smith]. And he continued to learn from the Cree people he met and often hunted for, first in Ft. Chipewan and later at Salt River. One was Old Man Waquan, who Magloire told Louis was someone whose stories he liked to listen to. When Magloire got a moose near Ft. Chipewyan, and with no dog team of his own, he went to Waquan's camp and three teams came back with him to get the meat. The next time he went to their camp they gave him a bag of dry meat. Waquan's daughter Flora later became the godmother of one of Magloire's son, Raymond, Magloire's brother-in-law Joe married one of her sisters, and Flora's son Norman married Magloire's daughter Nora.

When Magloire moved to Salt River, from Ft. Chipewyan, he stayed with an old couple, the Tourangeau's, the parents of Germain Tourangeau who later taught Frank Laviolette so much. Magloire did the same thing here: hunting for them, going out further than most of the other hunters, and walking back late at night under the northern lights. He gave the meat to the old woman who would then make dry meat and take care of the hide. Magloire listened to many of Chief Squirrels' stories at Salt River and mentioned Squirrel and many of the other Elders he respected, to his own children. If he did not particularly respect someone he would say nothing at all.

Magloire developed outstanding bush skills and he was known for his ability to walk and run great distances. Frank Laviolette recalls the story of Magloire running ninety miles in a day as told to him by Big Jim Bourke's father. As Louis remarks,

> All those bush men were real good and walked huge distances in one day. Now there's hardly anyone like that. In their time of life and part of my time, if you have to make an income the way they do you don't sit around, no income like

> this. If you don't do anything you don't have anything. Now 'days people just sit around, not moving, getting sick.

This ability to run far and run fast is mentioned in many accounts of northern peoples and is a mark of a respected man (Seton, 1911; Slobodin, 1966; Whitney, 1896).

After moving to Salt River and loosing his wife and four out of five children to disease he began a new family, marrying into a family which, like his own, had a tradition of healing with roots. Most likely Agnes' father, Alexis, thought Magloire, an experienced older man with many skills, would make a good husband. As Louis mentions, Magloire had to teach Agnes the bush skills required for a trapping life, including driving her own team, which she hadn't learned at the convent or on her family's small farm on Buffalo Head Prairie, near Fort Vermillion. An old lady at Salt River taught Agnes to tan moose hides. As Louis comments, "She didn't learn too much from the convent [in Vermillion] but mother was a good worker so everything works out O.K." Magloire and Agnes lost two children in childhood and later, in the bad times when they also began to make homebrew and drink, they lost two adult children to drinking: a son frozen to death, disoriented on a winters' night, and a daughter who was stabbed in her sleep by a jealous woman.

Louis stressed the importance of knowledge, of obtaining knowledge through relationship, through experience, and through one's own independent action and reflection. Remarking first on his father's views on obtaining knowledge he explains:

> Knowledge, you get it by studying it by yourself. My father said, "I'll tell you how to do it but then you have to study by yourself. If I have to teach you all the time how are you going to learn? If you learn it by yourself then you know you've got it.

As well,

> My father said, "If you see someone do something, do it and make sure the guy shows you if you made any mistakes. Don't be shy, ask someone how you're doing. Got to do it first before you can really know it." Young guys now see something done once and they say they know how to do it. Easy to say but it takes a little more work, more thinking about how to do it. To know how to do it takes doing it.

Following my comment on what a good listener Louis was, he went on to describe the process further:

> He had a story. We were together [trapping], no radio, he started telling stories he had. I was glad to know how he's been. All that I tell you, I don't tell lies, that's how I see it, how it happened. [My dad] don't ever tell lies to me. I listened, live like that. People told me the truth. The old people told us when they describe things and I begin to see and know they won't lie. I listened good and I did see how they explained things.
>
> And I came to see it, things how they describe it — they can't be lying. That's the way they described and I'm just listening to it. It comes into my mind all of a sudden, "That's the way they were talking about." I see it and then I know they aren't lying. I recognized it right away even if years ago and then when I see it, right away I remember. Lot of times I seen that, too. . . . It's a good way.

In the Western tradition, truth is ascertained by evidence, proofs that can be illustrated and known in the here and now. There is an answer that is universal, not personal, and the proof is found in substantiating bits of information. We often discount knowledge offered to us that we do not see an immediate need for. We store knowledge of alternatives in other ways than Louis does, particularly in written texts. However, in the Aboriginal tradition you often don't know what an Elder meant or a dream meant until much later. Still, as Louis Beaver noted, they could recognize it "when they see it/experience it." This way the story doesn't have to be immediately helpful. Out of respect, it is stored in memory leaving one with options open for recognizing fluctuations in conditions and differing responses that may be helpful at that point. This proves highly adaptive in the environmental and social conditions of subarctic and arctic peoples (Berkes & Folke, 1998; Cruikshank, 1988; Nuttall & Callaghan, 2000; Ridington, 1988; Sharp, 2001).

Additionally, as Louis describes and as other ethnographers have discussed, learning and the pace and meaning of learning is highly autonomous. Non-interference or "the freedom to act as they see fit" (Good Tracks, 1973, p. 30) in people's choices is essential to their learning (Brant, 1990; Goulet, 1998; Ridington, 2000; Ross, 1992;

Sharp, 2001). Thus, while Magloire learned hunting knowledge from Harry Desjarlais and others, Louis learned from Magloire.

> I learned from him, he explained it, "Here's how," he said. "Look at me, how I do it." You have to learn how to act when looking for something, for animals, they don't just run into you. You need to keep away from their eyesight and keep out of their wind. That's the only way an animal will come to you. If he sees you or you make a noise or he smells you no matter how long you wait you won't get anything. My father says you must always watch the wind, stay where wind is blowing your scent away. The three things you have to remember is wind, eyesight, and noise.

Magloire's bush knowledge was impressive and many people, including Frank Laviolette and Arthur Beaulieu, mentioned it to me. At the same time, some people gossiped about it, perhaps out of jealousy, what does he have (medicine)? Magloire, himself, attributed his success to having grown up in a more traditional bush setting than Ft. Smith and to his continual hard work, not laziness.

Louis, in his time, also became known as a good hunter and a good tracker as this "I poem" illustrates.

Past Mission Farms, A Cow and Two Calves
I remember once,
Big Frank [Laviolette] was working on a Cat.
He saw a track, asked me to go looking for it.
I said, "Ok. I'm not working."
I took the power line in.
I saw the tracks near the old bridge.
I made tea in a ditch.

He heard something,
Then I see something.
I saw a small little thing walking in the bush.
I circled around and saw the big moose.
I know he's headed for a poplar island.
I check the end of the island.
I notice sand flies — they were there.
I shot the cow.
I put the meat on sticks of wood
I let the air go under it.

I was standing in the bush
I heard something run beside me.
I got her, I skinned the calf.
I heard a little noise, a bear, a wolf?
I saw a little tree moving, a calf was there!
I had to skin it out, it was late.
I walked to Thebacha through a long stretch of bush.

I went back with sixteen people.
Maria and Louis Brown, Big Frank and his wife,
Maggie, Mary, maybe Raymond, they all went back there.
It was August, a real nice day.
We had a good time eating,
Eating lots of meat.

Louis worked on and off; trapping, fighting fires, and for field biologists where his bush skills were valuable. Last year it felt good when Louis and two of his sisters hunted by car on old bush roads for weeks finally getting a moose, the women teasing their husbands, who were also out driving the backroads, since they and Louis had succeeded first.

Louis showed me his grandmother Sophie's' Bible written in Cree syllabics. He considers it valuable in both an historical and a spiritual light. Magloire's mother, Sophie, was a very spiritual woman. Attending church was as important to her as was her knowledge of the medicines with which she healed many people. The bible was given to his mother, Agnes, by Sophie's' daughter, Anne Marie. Agnes was always very attached to the Catholic Church, working for the mission hospital and a regular church-goer. However, after hearing a priest, who didn't know she spoke French, joke with the sisters about what he had heard in confession she didn't feel quite the same afterwards. Magloire himself, in earlier times, was well known for drumming and singing at tea dances, often along with Flora Waquan's husband. These dances are remembered as very good times for the people. Some of Magloire's songs were recorded in 1981 by the CBC and family members continue to listen to this tape. Deeply spiritual, Louis remembers Magloire praying every day when they were camped out in the bush together.

> My father prayed and sang when we were out trapping. I could hear him. He told me, "Don't forget what I'm telling you. When you're alone offer prayers . . . Then you know you're alone, my mind is clear and not worrying about something happening to me. Know what you have to do and do it. Every night I pray, it helps." When he was in town he goes to Church. When alone he prays next day is a good day. He gets up and watch the daylight come.

This dual approach to religion is one held by many people in the region although others reject it. Referred to as religious syncretism in the literature, this strongly held combination of both traditional spirituality and Western religions have been noted by many ethnographers working in the subarctic, (Helm, 1994; Ridington, 2000; Sharp, 1987, 2001; D.M. Smith, 1973, 1981, 1997; Goulet, 1998; Rushforth, 1992, 1994). They received vision or knowledge through dreams or medicine, attended church frequently, and prayed regularly.

Telling stories to the children was important to both of Louis's parents. Agnes often gathered the children around her bed at night, telling stories of *Wisacachak*, the Cree trickster hero, whose foolish behavior and constant troubles, often led one to think about how to behave. While saying he had many more stories to tell, Louis told me this story, after we talked about his uncles having once seen some very large beaver.

Thousands of years ago had been a big beaver
At Athabasca Lake, toward Uranium City, Camsell Portage.
There's a place they call Beaver Lodge;
An island, rocky island, looks like a beaver lodge.
Years ago there used to be big beaver.
And you could see, just like a chisel,
Something's been poking into the rock.
That's just a story but it could be true
Because there's things that turn into rock.

There was big people, like giants
Small beaver and two big beaver in that (story).
Those rapids (Slave River) were where
they were making dams to have water.
When that guy (giant) got after those beaver
I guess he got a small one and one of the big ones.

One of them ran away.
That is where he made a trap, but up the river.
He went down that way. Trouble . . .
Chased that beaver and caught it up someplace, in a den.
He caught it up in the Ramparts (Mackenzie River) or in Great Slave Lake,
He stopped there, that beaver, and then (went) further.
And he got him up there.

There's a beaver (hide) stretched in the rock.
Keep it stretched there (Ramparts) against the rock.
Dad seen it on the steam boat.
He was on that boat one or two years, a deckhand,
one or two years.

This story, verified by Magloire's seeing the marks of the beaver skins on the cliffs at the Ramparts, on the Mackenzie River, was told by many people and other versions are recorded (Coutu & Hoffman-Mercredi, 1999; Wiebe, 2004). Through the story the water trail from Lake Athabasca to the Arctic Ocean and the major landmarks are located in the context of history. Giant animals were known to populate the land in the long ago past (Andrews et al, 1998; R. Beaver, 2002; Blondin, 1990, 1997; Paulette, 2000; Sharp, 1987). In some cases they were seen or sensed today, as in Arthur and Freddy Beaulieu's experience of seeing what they thought was a bear but which turned out to be a very large beaver. When the Provincial Museum of Alberta in Edmonton put the skeleton of a prehistoric beaver on display, Raymond Beaver, eager to see it, described the beaver seen by Arthur and Freddy as similar in size.

Many of the older people talk about not only how the river was formed and the animals that lived there, but also how it affected them in their life. Louis tells his father's story of the spring flooding in Salt River that occurred in high-water years and sometimes as a result of ice jams. The major flood of 1934 was a significant "historical moment' in that the damage was severe and caused some thinking about the future of the Salt River settlement. Some families moved into Ft. Smith at this time. In Louis' recounting of his father's experience he shows both pride and perspective.

There Was a Flood at Salt River

There was a flood at Salt River.
He was the one that saved all the families there.
He went out and Jean Arcand, his brother-in-law went with him.
Sepp too. Jonas Sepp, Gabe's brother.
There were three of them went to Buffalo River to get some beavers.
They make canoes to paddle up, canvas canoes, built one each.
Went on top of the falls someplace, then left the canoes there.
They were still there when that boy got there.
He (Magloire) cut his foot with that axe.
Jean Arcand had to bring him back to Salt Plains,
There he had dogs he left.

Salt Plains had lots of water.
Canoe or sleigh?
They put that canoe right on the toboggan.
Dogs pulled that canoe right on the toboggan.
Dogs pulled all, that canoe, across prairie.
Lot of water, it was easy to pull.
They got to Salt River through Fox Holes
Not far to Salt River and paddled that to Métis settlement.
In one day, dogs, canoe, he brought his brother-in-law, tent, food.

While he was there, break up.
His family was there, first wife.
All their families were left there.
All were out spring hunting except a guy, Phillip, at the trading post.
He climbed up, ice was running, all of a sudden ice started to race.,
That winter deep snow all over, even around Edmonton.
Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, all those places, lots of snow, four feet deep.
That's when that flood came, he came then.
So now when the water came up, he checked it, it's gone up.
One night it's already close to the bank, just a little more water.
I told them it's going to flood.
I called for all those women and kids.
Get your canoes and boats, lots.
Turn your boats and load in what's needed.

The other guy, the trader he helped me.
Right away I hauled my family up there.
Water starts to go up the hill.
Whoever needs to come, I am pulling.
Two boats going up to higher hill.
I pulled boats and they sit up on hay bales.
Finally, I can paddle around the houses.

I couldn't do anything, lots of dogs were tied up.
Couldn't do anything alone.
The dogs howling a long time.

Finally he found everybody.
All the people to a safe place.
It was lucky I was there.
I don't know what the women would have done.
All the kids were small, all the big ones were in the bush.
Not long after that he lost his wife to sickness.

After cutting his foot badly with an axe Magloire came back from the spring hunt, his brother in law bringing him, ending up at Salt River during the flood rather than out on the spring hunt as he usually was. The river backed up (from the Slave River into the Salt River) almost to the top of the bank one night and Magloire ended up getting everyone to Johnson's Landing, the highest point around. But he couldn't save the dogs.

Floods were not uncommon in Salt River but some were worse than others. Some led to stories of rescue, as in this one, death as in the dogs and of old man Eaton's cattle all drowned, movement as in the decision to move into Smith on top of its high bank after finding one's house damaged, and of spirituality as in the case of the flood that lifted old Francois Beaulieu's cross (that he prayed at) and floated it into the graveyard where it was later found resting on old Francois' (the rascal who became a saint) grave.

Death was not uncommon either. Magloire was in Ft. Chipewyan during the 1921 flu and remembers, as one of the few people that weren't sick, that he dug grave after grave, not able to keep up, often putting several bodies in each site. The only time they laughed, that time, was when they buried an old woman between two men. Although Magloire experienced many deaths in his own life, he had a vital sense of living, belief, knowledge, and hard work that to Louis *was* history and remains important to pass on.

Maryanne MacDonald (Tourangeau, Daniels), 1915, That's How I Made My Living

Maryanne MacDonald does her work with purpose; she knows what she likes. Fishing, sewing, cooking, working hard in every way possible, doing whatever needed to be done (and usually doing it her way) is a matter of course for her. And she says she likes it that way, particularly when producing something from *the land*, "When I go someplace I don't like to just go and camp. I like it when there's fish or if they could kill a moose so I could *do something*, you know." Maryanne still works hard cooking and sewing and taking care of others. What is important is "that's the way we used to live, it's from the land we live long time ago." Maryanne is also a great one for laughing at herself; she chuckles at the humour in how we see things.

A Cree Métis, Maryanne has lived in Ft. Smith since 1946 but she was raised outside of Ft. Chipewyan on the Quatre Forche (Four Forks) River. Her father, Pierre Tourangeau, lived in a delta world inherited from his father, one of fish, rabbits, dogs, and furs. He brought the products of the land, what he had for sale, in to town in a locally made Chipewyan skiff or in the winter with a dog team. William Butler mentions the frequent sight of Maryanne's grandfather, Antoine Tourangeau, a "solitary 'freeman' from the Quatre Forche", coming into town in 1873 (Butler, 1968 p. 146). And there were Tourangeaus in Ft. Chipewyan in the days of the NWCo. The first appears to be another Antoine Tourangeau working with Peter Pond in 1786

(Duckworth, 1990). Pierre's mother was Madeline Laroque, born in Red River: "her she was always French, pure French. She didn't understand Cree, she didn't understand English." Her father and his sister Rosalie, the two youngest of the children in this family, were orphaned in their teens and with no money they decided they had better take scrip while their brothers decided, instead, to take Treaty. In this area taking Treaty or scrip was often simply as arbitrary as this, but each led to a complicated legal definition of rights and restrictions.

In response to my question about history, Maryanne begins "at the start" with her mother and then quickly goes into a description of the yearly round, the way they made their living. Her mother, a Mercredi, died young from TB.

> Well, from the start, I remember, around that time we were pretty small. My mother was sick; she had TB and couldn't look after us. So my dad took us to the convent. So I don't remember everything, how we go, where we walk and that, but one place I never forget because they say when you get scared when you're small you don't forget. There's no roads them days, no truck, no car. So he has to get up on a big log hill, you know, crawl over it and take me on top there. Now he said, "Don't move, if you move you're going to fall down there and there's water, you drown." So I remember, oh I was so scared. I was just moving, holding to him.

Maryanne, a four year old then, must remember climbing across one of the big drift wood log jams made from the trees fallen from the always crumbling banks of the Peace and Athabasca Rivers. Ending up in the delta area, these log tangles were referred to as an *embarrass* in all the old traveler's accounts. The Peace Athabasca Delta is one of the biggest inland deltas in the world. Early traveler's remark on the huge numbers of waterfowl found here in the spring and the fall (Butler, 1968). The wetlands, however, have been dramatically reduced since the building of the Bennett Dam in British Columbia in 1968.

> When we got to the convent, I don't hardly remember, I was four years old. So they left us there and my mother, I don't even remember how she looks. I had a sister, she was younger than me and she want to keep her because she was sick, anytime she might die. So, only the nuns they used to go and see her. So

> one day she told the nuns, the nun was telling me this you know. She said, "I give up and you take my little girl, that's for you Sisters." So they take the little daughter into the convent. She used to crawl around . . . And from there we stayed there, we stayed there in the convent.

Eventually her father remarried and Maryanne came to live with him and his new wife. Maryanne was initially scared to go with them, to leave the convent. She wasn't used to leaving or as she puts it, "You don't see people, you know."

After this her father's way of life, of making his living, became Maryanne's way. "My dad, you know, he made his living selling, like, you know, from the land. Just fish. He used to fish the whole summer." When Maryanne mentions the land, she stresses the word *land* and to my ear stretches the word out in, what I assume is an emphasis on its importance as a whole way of life. When asked about history Maryanne, significantly, describes the seasonal way of life based on living on the land:

> And my stepmother used to make dry fish. *Oh* she used to be good at making dry fish. And me, I used to help her, scaling the fish. And it has to be real clean. She was *clean* woman, you know.
>
> So that went like that. My dad he used to take dogs from like the Hudson's Bay. You know, you didn't have anything else those days, just dogs them days. He'd look after them dogs at Quatre Forche River [for the summer]. And some other people, like the Indians they used to stay in the bush the whole winter, you know, and they used to come [to Ft. Chipewyan] for Treaty. So they want to go to town now, and they have a bunch of dogs, the Hudson's Bay and Colin Fraser too. Well they told my dad to look after all them dogs, I used to help him. So I used to help him, I was just like a boy and girl the same! And I used to like to work. I wasn't lazy!

Cleanliness, hard work, and organization in how everything was done was important in Maryanne's family, even to the point that she did both what were considered boy's chores and girl's chores. Also a matter of pride was the variety of ways that fish could be prepared for sale. Her father rowed his skiff, bringing the fish in to Ft. Chipewyan. As Maryanne recalls:

So after that now we finished (taking care of dogs).
Now in the fall we used to go to Ft. Chipewyan.
No kicker and that, nothing, no engine.
Just oaring you know.
He used to go early in the morning.
He used to get up.
He used to tell me, “Come on, get up!
You have to fix some fish before I goes.”
I used to get up.
Fix fish, you know.
Wash them good, wipe them good.

And he used to put down, eh, what do you call it?
In his boat . . . these leaves.
He cut up a bunch of leaves, put them in his boat.
The fish you know.
Some smoked fish too.
I made some smoked fish for that.
After that he took some more leaves.
Now he put *lots* of them.
Flies they don’t go inside it.
He used to take, used hundred pound bags, you know,
Just *full* of dry fish.

Everything was dry.
Even from the dryfish, the backbone,
My stepmother used to make *real* good you know, *clean*.
So even that, the Chipewyan people they want it.
They wanted to buy.
They told my dad to take over there.
They want to buy it from you.
That’s the way my dad made his living.
So he used to come home with what we need,
You know, he bought with what money they give him.
Yeah. That’s the way he made his living.

Berries were also important. First lots of raspberries were picked; some were used for jam and the rest taken into Ft. Chipewyan and sold, as were blueberries in their turn. Blueberries were sold both as jam or fresh, “cause in Chip they don’t go anyplace.” Maryanne’s comment speaks to what Scollon and Scollon (1979) (working in Ft. Chipewyan) refer to as the differences in people holding a primarily bush consciousness and town people, like Emilia’s family the Mecredis, who worked mainly in the community. Later, cranberries were picked for the family’s use. Lots of geese and ducks were cleaned and salted for the winter. After the fall they left Quatre Forche and went into the bush to trap for the winter, keeping an eye out for good places for trapping beaver under the ice. At the same time fish were caught for the family and importantly for winter feed for the dogs. They got lots of rabbits by knocking down some poplar trees in one area, thus feeding and fattening them up. Later her father would set gillan twine (not wire) snares in a manner which killed the rabbit right away making them taste better, "not watery like now," often taking a sled load into Ft. Chipewyan for sale.

Maryanne remarks that her Dad "Did everything just right. Nothing wrong at all he used to do. He's a hard working man." Still, he was also a strict parent expecting the children to work hard and not allowing much social activity, "You just stay home all the time." She remembers vividly the few tea dances she was allowed to go to with her aunt, although her dad always made her leave early. She recalls with pleasure the gifts of handkerchiefs or money you would receive, each partner holding on to an end during the dance.

Maryanne began her sewing, the sewing that has sustained her most of her life, at home.

> I used to do sewing. I was eleven years old when I start to make moccasins. The first pair it was for my brother. The next pair it was for my dad. So after that, Chipewyan Indians they used to go away there in the fall and Christmas. They used to give me a bunch of sewing to do. So I did that. When they come back they told me, [they give me moose hide and fur and beads] you could make yourself money. I was glad.
>
> My stepmother she used to sew and I used to watch her. She didn't want me too close to watch . . . but I could see what she was doing. I used to make fur dolls and little moccasins. So that way I used to make little flowers. I used to draw. And it was good sew. So after my stepmother saw it was good sewing, "That's the way," she told me. "You better make your brother his moccasins too."

Through the rest of her life Maryanne did sewing for people. In Ft. Smith she made parkas for the RCMP and many of the white families. Back in Ft. Chip the stores would provide her with the hide, beads, and furs so that she could make everyday wraparounds and fancy moccasins for them to sell. When she was alone or raising her kids alone, sewing was usually her only source of income, that's how she made her living. Maryanne still loves sewing, continuing to make beautiful moccasins for her family is a matter of great pride to her. Maryanne is an artist, an artist in silk and hide and duffle. Her moccasins are unusual as they use two design styles, both geometric and floral, making something of unusual beauty.

By sixteen Maryanne, a very short but strong woman, was a hard worker and had many valuable skills. As Maryanne's "I poem" describes it, she was marriageable. She explains, "A long time ago they would give their kids away, you know."

Marriage

I couldn't even talk to anybody.
To any boy even I couldn't talk.
My dad was so strict.
So one day I was sixteen
And this lady come to see my dad.
I didn't sit around.
I have to go out.

My dad said, "She wants to know if
You could get married to her son."
He had all fancy dogs, all fancy *tapiz* [dog blankets].
And he was a good hunter, they said.
I was glad.
I thought,
"Now I could eat butter.
I could drink tea and sugar.
I'm going to have my own house."
I didn't think anything else about it.

I didn't know what it is to get married.
I didn't know nothing when I got married.
I don't know what for you get married.
I have to go through that.
I find out what is marriage

Maryanne's father worried about what would happen to her if anything ever happened to him, given that her own mother was dead, and he encouraged her to get married.

When it came to having a baby Maryanne recalls not knowing much about having babies either and being too shy to ask. Having a hard time with the birth, the Sister told her, "'Very soon you're going to have your baby now. So I'm gonna give you something, you need sleep" she said "So your baby be born," So she give me some medicine. So I slept that way and I guess the baby was born and I wake up and they had the baby there." With mastitis she ended up bottle feeding the baby. The baby was a difficult baby and Maryanne describes her mother in-law as convincing her that if she didn't give the baby to her to raise, the baby would die.

Maryanne had twelve children in all. Most of the children from her first marriage were raised in the convent in Ft. Chip where she had spent part of her own childhood. Maryanne describes her husband as turning out not to be such a hard worker after all, recalling how she had to go and get wood and water for them. When she left him after six children, she first stayed with Jimmy Wylie and his wife in Fort Chipewyan. The Wylie family (Métis), originally from the Orkney Islands, had been building Chipewyan skiffs for generations. Here, in her late twenties, she learned to speak English. She still misses not being able to speak Cree very often. Her husband, William Daniels, later moved to Ft. Smith where he held a job with the government as a construction worker for many years and married Frank Laviolette's sister.

Moving to Ft. Smith, for a change, she did all kinds of things to make money and had more children, before finally settling in with Bubbles (John) MacDonald, a good friend, a nice guy who made her laugh and who told her he was going to help her make a living for her kids. Bubbles built her a nice house with a big, bright kitchen for cooking and sewing in, where she still lives. In an area of town where she recalls caribou used to come, it was one of the first houses built on the west side of town. Maryanne and Bubbles enjoyed doing things like going out to Salt River for fish. Maryanne recalls enjoying drying fish with her older daughter Eileen and bringing it in to town to sell. When their children were nearly raised, in a community with an increasing amount of drinking, Bubbles began drinking and partying on work trips and back in the community. Although Maryanne had a period when she drank too, she didn't like Bubble's behavior. Finally that was that, she'd had enough and she never changed her mind.

Maryanne enjoyed having her father stay with her when he was old and recalls people he knew, like Magloire Beaver, coming and visiting him, enjoying speaking in Cree. When she first came to Ft. Smith she shared a house with an old man who she cooked for in exchange for housing. Caring for her father reminded her of how much she liked taking care of old people. After she left Bubbles she prayed for some old people to come into her life and the Social Services office began to send her elderly or mentally disabled adults to care for. One woman still lives with her, Maraynne, at eighty-seven still working hard and hopeful that she herself will never have to go into the Northern Lights Home "when she's old."

TB and flu epidemics affected Maryanne's early life a great deal. Her mother and her mother's sisters all died with TB. Later her brother got TB at the time of the bad flood. Warned that it was going to be a bad flood year they moved along with other families to one of the higher rocky areas and stayed there for the spring rat hunt. Despite having a sore under his arm which the doctor had cut open, her brother worked hard. Even though he was sick he caught over a hundred rats that spring by starting out early and staying out late while, Maryanne recalls, some of the others, not hard workers, caught only ten or twelve. But

> He was pitiful, he couldn't wash his clothes. And my stepmother she was scared of sickness. So I was pregnant too you know. I was big, in May, in April supposed to be born my baby . . . I told him get water. I said we'll warm it up and put someplace, I said, where I can wash your clothes.

She also washed the rags he had over his open sore. But he was a good brother and, "I always used to say, 'If I'm gonna get that sickness I'll get it. I never was afraid of it.' Sadly her brother died, and she recalls, "There was nothing. When you're TB they can't do nothing. They don't give them anything. Only when they're sore, some place they give them aspirins, that's all."

When Maryanne was a girl the Fort Chipewyan area experienced many deaths from flu and dysentery particularly at Treaty time.

> They used to be *all over* for Treaty times. Tents here all over, all over. Way back to over there. Well, they were just dying, people. Some of them they run away to an island not far from here. So they stay there, think they wouldn't get

> that sickness but about four or five days someone went over there, they were all dead. That time it was a flux or *les dysenteries* but another time it was flu. They had flu too. Oh it was strong flu, now it's nothing this flu. I was staying with my stepmother's sister, my Auntie Rosalie. Her husband and her and her daughter, they were all down. They just stayed in the front room. They close up the kitchen as they couldn't eat . . . I used to bring wood inside that porch, you know, piled up good . . . So I just put my little blanket on the floor there. I didn't cover myself . . . that way if I get cold I'll know the fire's going down. So that way I used to make fire for them the whole night so they didn't catch cold. If they want something I used to give them. So one morning I was thinking, half crazy. I thought, "Gee, I wish I get sick."

A remarkably resilient woman, Maryanne credits the fish, which even today are a big part of her diet as part of what has kept her healthy. "Lunch time we'll have fish, supper time too we'll have fish but different kind, different way you cook." Her stepmother made oil from the fish guts, processing it until it looked just like cod liver oil. When they were done it was put up in big jars and stored underground. As she explains: "He used to put under the ground and make a hole, after that boards and after that cover with a lot of trees." And her father did the same thing with the river water they used after he'd boiled, strained, and put it up in barrels. Maryanne's family made use of all the good food of the land and of the community using many cooking methods still recalled with pride. Going out in the spring with her Auntie Rosalie to make birch syrup who she stresses was a good worker.

So now in the spring, birds, after no snow.
My Auntie Rosalie said,
"Oh we'll go in the bush and we'll take some of those wings.
We'll fix it over there."
So that way we went.

She was getting pretty old.
Me, I used to haul all the wood, everything.
Her, she make the fire, start, and after that
I used to take two pails.
I used to go in the bush.
Just full of oil (birch sap), used to bring,

fill in the pails where she's boiling.
Her, she didn't do that 'cause she's kind of old.

But me I used to like to do things.
Gee it was nice.
And that way it boil steady, boil, boil . . .
Now towards the end just one pail it boils there,
just brown you know.
But my Auntie Rosalie, her,
she used to put Rogers' Golden Syrup inside.
If she don't do that it be bitter.
That's why she used to do that.
And after that she used to put all inside little bottles,
You know for to eat with that, what you call, hotcakes and that.
It was nice.

And those wings now we take,
We boil some water, so we put the wings inside.
And after that we take all the feathers and we clean.
So after that she wash good, you make sure no feathers.
Take it home she puts that down in the cellar, keep real good.
Now towards the end now, we took heads,
That one too she do the same.
So she used to make a pot of soup with that.
Oh I used to like that barley soup.
Gee, it was nice.

To Maryanne the way they cooked, wasting nothing, is part of the way they lived, the way they made their living on the land and this is an essential aspect of understanding history. Her relationship with her Auntie Rosalie, her father's sister, and also a hard worker was cemented through their work together, their skills complementing each other as they worked to produce the birch syrup. At the same time they boiled the spring duck wings and heads, keeping the feathers, adding barley and enjoying the meal. In another story Maryanne tells how it was not only the food of the land they were resourceful in using but also the leftovers of the non-Aboriginal community. She describes how her aunt used to get a steer's head after they'd slaughtered one at the mission. It would have to be cleaned first as the lay brothers' standards weren't up to theirs, then boiled and all the meat put away for the winter. They also made good use of the guts not wanted by the mission filling them with "blood, carrots, turnips, onions and after that she take this rolled oats and she does that, you know it's all smash." Although she says she didn't know it then, living and working on the land was the most important part of Maryanne's life; she regrets that she'll "never see them days again."

Frank Laviolette (1926-2004)

I went to five funerals this last year and there were at least fifteen deaths from the community including cancers, suicide, and a death in an alcohol related fire. Attending funerals and grieving is a continual part of life in this community, something that cannot be emphasized enough in understanding the experience of this and many other Aboriginal communities. Frank's funeral was well attended; the Cathedral was filled with people coming from all over including the Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, a long time friend of his daughter Freda's. Before his death, Frank had chosen two readings, both by Aboriginal leaders he knew personally, leaders who had touched his life and who he respected. The first was by Alberta Cree political and spiritual leader, Albert Lightning, and the second by actor Chief Dan George. As Father Piche pointed out in his funeral service, Frank Laviolette was a complex man full of passion, with a temper that could hurt others, but also someone who held much experience, knowledge and strong beliefs. Frank, a large man was referred to most of his life as "Big Frank" and his size could be intimidating. Frank was both smaller and gentler in his later years pointing out that he wanted people to continue his fight but not to fight each other so much. Speaking to Raymond Beaver, as a leader going through a tough political fight, Frank told him that because of his own health he would no longer be able to help politically. Instead, he encouraged Raymond not to let things get to him or to bring anger about the many problems facing their community home, as he said he had.

Frank held great respect and love for the old men who taught him as a boy, whose stories he heard, and whose ways he observed by accompanying them in the bush. This is what he wanted to talk about when asked about history. The stories of these men are the stories of great men. They were great hunters, trappers, runners, knowers, and holders of power. Yet therein also lay some of the roots of his later anger at biologists and government bureaucrats. He remembers officials treating these men — those who "knew", knew so much in terms of the bush, the animals, the land and who also had great medicine power — disrespectfully. Frequently they did not understand the importance of the old men who sat on the floor in these meetings at the old Hotel Mackenzie. As a young man Frank was often asked to interpret for the chiefs. Their language, the Chipewyan language, was very important to Frank and he continued to use it regularly with his friends and as a speaker, story teller, and frequent guest on the Chipewyan language radio programs hosted by Emily Jones on CBC North.

Frank's story in many ways mirrors the story of the buffalo so important to him: health, sickness, resistance, and adaptation while being controlled, moved to a central location, and threatened by diseases introduced by these same people. Frank saw this connection and guarding the stories of these old men and of the buffalo was the central passion of his life. In the middle period of his life, he nursed his anger through drinking and sometimes ended up hurting people, even those he loved. Finally, at a low point in the 1960s, Frank credits Father Camille Piche, a young priest at the time, for encouraging him to channel his energy into righting wrongs and by doing so as saving his life. He saw resistance to control by government systems through Aboriginal organizations as a path to self-determination not only in his own life but for Aboriginal people as a whole. Believing that the old men he respected had signed the Treaty for a reason — they weren't foolish, they knew something, they had good reasons — he supported the pursuit of Treaty rights.

At the same time, Frank was also deeply spiritual in a mixture of traditional spirituality, Catholicism, and what he referred to as the spirituality of the buffalo. He had a great respect for the importance of dreams, often recalling a dream when he was very sick where he visited his deceased sister in heaven, climbing glass steps to her before being sent back again. He had sought doctoring for this illness from Albert Lightning, a well known Cree medicine man. When he was recovering from surgery in the hospital in Edmonton last year (2003) he continued to have visions that were important to him.

Earlier in life, Frank had given up his Chipewyan status, as he says, partly to see if he could do it, be accepted under the criteria of the Indian Act as "as good as a white man" and partly for access to the liquor denied to Indian people but allowed to Métis. Métis adults could buy liquor while Treaty peoples were forced to buy liquor at exorbitant prices from bootleggers or to make homebrew. This meant people often drank in the bush around town. At that time, the police were always on the lookout for people breaking the liquor regulations, often entering peoples' houses with no real excuse. Frank later regretted this choice, as he did the drinking, and following the passage of Bill C-31, he regained his status. He was, in his time, a leader in the early Thebacha organization and in both Métis and First Nations organizations. He proudly signed both the Smith's Landing Treaty Land Entitlement Claim in 2000 and the Salt River TLE Claim in 2002.

After years of working as a heavy equipment operator, Frank later ran a sport hunting business for buffalo. He met many interesting people this way. The birth of a white buffalo in the United States was a matter of great importance for him and two of his former customers helped him travel to the United States to see the buffalo. When his grandson Brad Laviolette shot a yearling buffalo with white markings in 2002 he knew it was very significant for him. Frank loved and was proud of his children and grandchildren, but it was with great regret that he shared the last period of his life alone, without his wife who had gone through so much with him. In later life, a gentler and a calmer wisdom began to emerge. At seventy-eight Frank's loss was too early. He had much to tell. He enjoyed speaking about the past and he was now able to use the forces driving him in a new way that would perhaps have allowed more people to hear what he had to say rather than dismiss him as simply angry.

Frank's parents died of TB, first his mother Elise (Beggair) and then a few years later, when he was just ten, his father, Jean Marie. Frank was first taken in by old Chief Squirrel and his wife. When Chief Squirrel was hospitalized and they couldn't keep him any longer, Frank went to live with Squirrel's daughter Rosalie and her husband Billy Lyall, a white free trader. Billy often gave Frank permission to travel in the bush with the old men, knowing he could learn much from them. Germain Tourangeau, the step-father of his Salt River playmates Maria Brown and Ernestine La Hache, was his godfather. Germain took a fatherly role with Frank and they trapped together for twenty-one years. Telling stories was a big part of the conversation in the bush and Frank remembered these stories and wanted them to be told in a manner that would benefit his grandchildren.

In listening to Frank tell his stories and those of these old men, I could see he had struggled with two voices, one of pride . . .

> We knew something, we had knowledge, our skilled men were great hunters, great trappers and great runners who held great history, great power. I was proud to be taught by those old men who knew something.

and the other of shame and anger . . .

> I hurt, they [white men]) didn't listen to those old men [who knew], I was shamed, I was angry, I resisted, I wouldn't let them kill [destroy] them [buffalo] or me, I told what I knew, and I will never stop.

The following "I poem" illustrates this. It refers to the roundup of buffalo by helicopter in 1962 in an attempt to control an outbreak of anthrax and also the arrival of the plains bison in 1926 from Buffalo National Park in Wainwright, Alberta. Shipped down the river on a barge, these bison let loose quickly spread both plains bison genes and the cattle diseases they carried with them.

I Went Through It All

I don't think anybody knows more about it.
I know about it because I was interested.
I would drop too if I was run like those buffalo.
That's why they got TB.
They're chasing them in cold weather with helicopter.

I see woman's have tears.
The cows dropped in February, half sticking out, frozen.
I finished 'em off along the road, me and David King.
It was pitiful.

I believe them guys too, they don't tell lies.
Even when they moved them, already they're sick.
Magloire Beaver and Jimmy Bourke were working on the *Echo*.
Buffalo squeezed together on that scow so tight
There were sores, maggots.
They couldn't move, get water.
Some died standing up.
I believe them.
I believe that story.

I trapped with Germain Tourangeau.
I learned so much what he learned before.
I seen that trail going towards Hook Lake.
He saw them there already fifteenth of November.
I heard Park says they weren't.

I don't believe in one word they tell me.
I done a hell of a lot of raising hell.
I just call biologists a liar straight.
I went in that bloody office many times.
I tell them the truth, it goes back to Chief Squirrel.
He seen that anthrax happen before.
I went in there, they don't know who's Chief Abram, Chief Andre.
They're park trappers before the park is established!

I think the biologists, they're two-faced,
Including Novakowski, my best friend one time.
He called me in that report
Something like, the people who don't know nothing.
But I know something,
When I was working for him
I was his *best* God Damn Cat skinner.
I worked *hard* for him.
And he forgot all that.

They don't understand what we know.
Chief Squirrel told about that happened before,
That they die off before, bones touching.
I have no love for biologists.
They don't believe you, that's why.
Even Chief Squirrel they don't believe.

And this is the man that signed the Treaty.
The right hand hunter of old Beaulieu.
I tried to tell them what those old men say.
What they say about the buffalo . . .
If you leave them alone, they will doctor themselves.
That's what the Park don't understand.

Frank mentions the lost opportunity to do a lot of good work for the bison if the biologists had sat down with the old men, if they'd worked together. Frank remembers that he wasn't the only man to resist. He also told stories, both the good and the bad, about Old Francois (Beaulieu). And he remembers, while interpreting for Chief Abram, how strongly he held out for "our land" during the negotiations for the boundaries of the newly established group trapping areas (Hay River, Garden River, Fort Smith, etc.). Frank remembered Abram, who followed Squirrel as chief as, quiet but tough in his way and always with his chief's suit on, as "a great man, one of the great trappers." Going on, he remarks that Andre, his brother, Sub-Chief and Chief after Abram, was an even better trapper. Andre's son, Bobby Alex, the fourth chief (see Appendix C for list of chiefs), despite missing a leg, trapped "anyplace a man can trap" by using a snowshoe specially made for his crutch. Frank was also proud of his being related to the series of Chipewayn chiefs in Ft. Chipewyan, Alberta.

The Laviolette name is an old one in the region. Early NWCo. accounts refer to a Francois Laviolette hired by Peter Pond for a three year stint at a new post on Great Slave Lake (Duckworth, 1990) and a Francois Laviolette (likely the same man) is also found working as an engagé out of Ft. Chipewayn in 1800 (Keith, 2001). Frank's father married in to the Beggair family based in Salt River, moving there to hunt and trap with them. When I asked Frank what was important to know about the history of the community of Ft. Smith and its people he told me many things but he chose to start with the story of the York Boat men. Frank reminds us in our interest in the stories of Rupert's Land and of the Athabasca/Mackenzie region we must acknowledge a larger vision of where these stories may be found and of who they have been important to. Orphaned as a boy after his parents each died of TB, Frank admired these men who worked on the York boat and later scow brigades, and who took him in hand during the winter and taught him what he needed to know. And as they traveled together, Frank worked hard and they showed him what to do and shared much with him. Frank chose to tell me about these men more as living history rather than simply to tell about himself. Aware, following surgery, that he could die soon, he pointed out that his own story of concerns about the abuse of buffalo by government and biologists had already been told and gave me access to previously recorded audio-tapes of this material. Frank prefaced what he had to say with an explanation, that:

> You know, this is mostly honest, hand down stories, there's no man that can tell you a story about 120 years ago. I know some books written about it, that way we never use, how they got the story is hand down. I've been listening to Elders since I was young. I remember many times, I listened to many Elders when I was very young. Kids should be out playing and nothing else, but I didn't.

Going on he gave me an account of the York boats and scows, Mountain Portage, and the Slave River Rapids and the men whose lives were full doing what those being transported viewed as onerous, almost impossible work (see Appendix D). This story of the York boats is also connected to the stories of Pierre Squirrel and the stories of the old men of knowledge from Frank's youth. Where Pierre Squirrel came from and how they first knew of his power is recounted in the telling of Squirrel's display of medicine power. I have heard Frank tell this story several times, awe in his voice as he stresses what Pierre Squirrel had. Pierre Squirrel arrived in Ft. Smith on the York boats according to what Frank remembers Paul King Beaulieu telling him. Born in 1849, as a young man Squirrel became a hunter for Francois Beaulieu at Salt River and worked the York boats in the summer becoming well known as a steersman. Following the signing of Treaty 8 he became the first chief, remaining chief for close to forty years. In the following narrative, an account of conflict between Squirrel and a Cree medicine man illustrates when people knew for sure about Squirrel's power.

Chief Squirrel and the Fancy Hat

When he came down on the York boats,
 of course they shoot the rapids.
Then they claim the York boats race.

They go straight across from around that island.
And they claim he always wins, gets to shore first.
That's what I was told by people who work for him
    like Suzie Kye and Boniface Boucher.
    (Everybody's gone now, eh.)
And they claim, down the hill [by the river],
    were lots of different people on the York boats.
Different towns, different people, like Cree.

So down the hill when they land they eat there.
And this Cree guy,
    I guess Chief Squirrel had a fancy hat,
    made out of velvet and bead,
    piece of moose hide, you know.
    Yeah, fancy hat.
And this Cree guy,
    he always figures he was better than anybody else,
    always.
(And of course Chief Squirrel didn't tell me this,
    the other people told me.)

So he ask Chief Squirrel for that hat.
And Chief Squirrel told him,
    "If you want one like this,
    get your wife to make you one,
    your woman to make you one.
    This is mine."
So he told him, he actually told him,
    "You're going to be sorry."
    Chief Squirrel's gonna be sorry.
So he didn't say nothing.
They finish eating, guess took quite awhile.
When everybody's sitting there
    Chief Squirrel says,
    "I'm gonna go in the bush over there,
    you come behind me.
    And then we'll settle for the hat."

So after a while this guy,
    the other medicine man,
    Cree guy,
    went behind him
    and some guys went behind him.
And there was a big grizzly,
    licking it's paws laying there.
    And then that Cree guy turned back,

didn't go no further.
And after that Chief Squirrel come back.
So that settle that hat.

Frank had many stories about Chief Squirrel and his ability as a medicine man. He wanted these stories told. This Chipewyan knowledge system, is often referred to by the Chipewyan word *inkonze* in anthropological accounts (D.M. Smith, 1973; Helm, 1994; Rushforth, 1992; Sharp, 1986). It refers to the Chipewyan word for people who's dreaming or special relationship with a helper can assist the people. Frank used the term "medicine power" in talking with me in English, as does Dene (Dog Rib/Bear Lake) Elder George Blondin in his two books of history (Blondin, 1990, 1997). Dave Smith (1973), an anthropologist working with Fort Resolution people in the early 1970s mentions Chief Squirrel as having been "a very famous individual with inkonze," (p.15). He published a story about Squirrel fending off a medicine attack meant to test his power.

In another story told several times, Squirrel wasn't successful in fending off another medicine man's attack and ended up sick in a bush camp in the Caribou Mountains, southwest of Salt River. Frank's older brother, Francoise, often spoke to him about how fast Squirrel was. He ran his sled with just a three dog team, all big dogs. They were the fastest dogs around. Squirrel always ran in front of them, even when the trail was already broken, saying he didn't like the smell of dog's breath. Up in the Caribou Mountains with just his wife (second wife, McKay) and son, people were surprised when Weezo came running into Salt River. His father sick with a hole, a weakness in his stomach, was too weak to travel home himself and told his son, "Go to Salt River and try and find Suze Marie and tell him." Despite the many days it regularly took to travel to Salt River from the Caribou Mountains, many people talked for years about the shortness of that trip. Using his father's three big dogs "they claim he left there and next afternoon he was in Salt River with them dogs, with a big load of dry meat." Despite having to break trail and being a fast runner himself, the dogs ran so fast that Weezo couldn't keep up with them. Luckily Suze had just got in from his own trapline. Using his own power, that night Suze fixed (cured) Pierre all the way up in the Caribou Mountains. When his son got back his father was fine and on the return trip to Salt River he ran ahead of the dogs as usual.

Having fast dogs is often stressed as an indication, usually without saying so directly, that dog medicine may have been used. Frank claims that everybody had their "own stuff for the dogs" going on to say that, "All them Beaulieus they were the same. Like Raymond's uncles, they're all dog men. *Nobody* has dogs like that," meaning they had good medicine for dogs. Cutting your own stuff for your dogs would not hurt either you or the dogs; however, Frank cautioned that "when you buy things it hurts you."

In speaking of this story, Frank stresses what great men both Pierre and Suze, Fuzzy (Victor) Marie's grandfather, were. He refers to Suze who he used to go out in the bush with, as not only a medicine man but a very kind-hearted man. He remembered Paul King Beaulieu the same way:

> "I stayed with him lots too. We used to go for rats, spring hunt. Thousands of rats, never kill 'em all . . . He's a medicine man, he's a Métis. But I never heard him say he's a Métis, them days, didn't talk like that."

Instead, Frank emphasized repeatedly, how they all got along then as one people without focusing on differences in background.

Frank also emphasized that how people lived, the yearly cycle and of how people worked and lived all down the river was also an important aspect of history.

> People were pretty well organized, how they lived. They dried fish, meat, dog food in the summer. People have camps for the winter all down the river, dog sleighs, tents. Salt River was a trading post. And the next stop was seven miles, called Louis Brown and McCollum's, Pete McCollum used to trap out of there, they go east.
>
> And the next stop is Grande de Tour, that was a hay camp. More than one family live there. Even when I was young, about five families. And they trap into the Park [WBNP]. They have two story log houses. A big prairie's behind Grande de Tour, at one time full of water, full of rats. They even had a trading store like, Ken Hudson's grandfather had a trading store.

> And Susie [Joseph] King, son of Paul King [Beaulieu] was telling me, he went and worked for one of the white trappers, Hornby, along Little Buffalo. I seen the cabin, was there not too long ago. Trapped minks on the prairie, so much minks, pack it in, traps . . . so much fur.
>
> I remember that old couple, McLeod, that was Louis Brown's aunt. They had a cabin there, went out in the fall, come back in the spring. Then it's just four or five miles from there down, called Dan Beaton's island. And Dan Beaton had a cabin there, trapping east. From there you could see down the river, see Archie Mandeville's cabin. That old trapper around here. That cabin stay along time. Not too long ago tore it down.
>
> So that's the way people lived. There was something on the land *to live*, you know to take, fur. That goes on like that. So that's the way they went right through to Resolution. So that's a hell of a lot of people and a hell of a lot of fur.

What Frank is portraying here is the nature of the river as a place to live and work with houses and trappers that were located all the way down the river from Ft. Smith to Ft. Resolution, not empty as it is now. The land was alive with people, people living on the land, people making a good living on the land. And it wasn't just on the river, there were trappers who "went east' across the river and others traveling southwest towards the Caribou Mountains to trap. Fur was plentiful and their houses substantial. Frank, as do others, often pointed out that the houses were often two stories, two story log houses. In the account above people were spread out, respecting proper spacing, without needing government systems like zoning or registered traplines.

Speaking to me in the hospital in Edmonton in September 2003, Frank mentioned that his son-in law had gotten a moose that weekend and that his grandson, Cory, had recently shot his first moose. He was pleased, but he also remarked that no one hunts moose the way they did, tracking the moose in the bush and then packing the meat out. "Those young people, no one taught them. They rely on seeing it rather than tracking it." He mentioned Oliver Beaulieu and Louis Beaver as good hunters who knew the importance of watching the wind, noise, and smell. He remembers his own first moose; he got two of them while out caribou hunting with Alfred Emile, Freda Emile's grandfather. "He teach me *a lot*. And I used to like him so much. Kids like the older people sometimes." Planning to bring home lots of meat, Frank had his own team of seven big dogs. An exciting time, not only did he kill caribou but also two moose, a cow and a calf. At that time, caribou used to come over by Fitz., they'd go up the Dog River and hit caribou before Birch Lake. People were living all over out there at that time, including widows, "The widows, had their own dog teams and set their own nets, run dogs, dry meat. We stay with them, camp with them, all the dry meat you want. We gave them some meat. They stay out there all winter. They come to town to get supplies."

In the fall, after moose hunting time, Frank remembers that in the past the people would go out to the bush on November 1st, waiting longer than they once had in order to go to the church service on All Saints Day. Needing to put in a supply of dog food for the winter they first fished for whitefish below the falls on the Little Buffalo River, especially Abram (chief after Squirrel) and his group. "They cut a spruce tree and put it across the river, put some leaves down there too (to make a kind of pool, then they can get fish there. Put ten fish on a stick and then hang them to freeze." Above the falls there was a lake which didn't freeze completely, called "the fishery" where small suckers, eight or nine inches long, were plentiful.

> "You can make a scoop out of a burlap bag with a stick across the top [for a handle] and scoop them out. If there's four feet of water, there's four feet of fish, that's what they say. People who are out trapping that way get lots of fish for their dogs. We let them freeze together and cut them up in squares and pack it in a bag, makes good dog food. Many families come, seventeen families would be there sometimes to get dog food and I don't mean just one trapper in each family, some would have three men. It was burnt later, used to be lots of shacks, cabins, a buffalo ranger cabin [WBNP wardens], lots of stoves there.
>
> There's another place over at Preble Creek that's also like that. Germain Tourangeau went there. My dad lived over there before, near Preble Creek. The trappers have to know where all the places like that are. Now they don't know. Maybe there isn't so much now. When you harvest it more comes.

> Close to Big Buffalo there is a creek into a lake, we walk there it is Hay Lake. Everyone, the trappers from Hay River, Resolution, Ft. Smith and Fitzgerald, they all meet there. Great moose hunting down there. There are jackfish there about so long (two feet). You can set a net. If there was a dam [beaver] we opened it up a bit, put spruce boughs on the ice, the fish come through there and land on the spruce boughs, they don't freeze to the ice, we can pick them up. When we're finished just close the dam."

Frank concluded by saying that, "the trapper knows every little place like the farmer knows his land." Knowledge of every little place was needed to make a living this way, to provide options for trapping in different places depending on conditions and fur cycles, and to obtain food for people and dogs. Commenting that people were organized, Frank described how they could use materials available in the environment to efficiently gather fish. While some people trapped together, families had their own systems of where to go, when to go there and what environmental conditions worked well for them. By stressing that seventeen families, some with several trappers, could all be in one area, Frank is making the point that "we weren't pitiful," that we weren't starving, that the land was rich.

Importantly, he is also referring to the different relationships that could be maintained with other trappers met in the bush, trappers from other communities including the Paulettes from Fitzgerald and others from Resolution, and also with animals. That harvesting animals seems to result in higher numbers was something Frank heard as a youth and has observed himself. This is similar to accounts of other subarctic hunters that point to the relationship of respect between animal and hunter as essential to luck in hunting (Brightman, 1993; Feit, 1973, 1994; Quill, 2004; Tanner, 1979; Sharp, 2001). Dreaming of a moose or a woman is often followed by getting a moose. Frank and Louis noted that people in that time knew not only where to find animals but also other people, despite not having fixed trap-line areas. Many of them came into the central Buffalo Lake-Hay Lake area from small communities all around where there was good jack fishing (with a net) and also good moose hunting. Competition was not a major factor then but became more so in the 1940s to1960s with registered traplines and established group trapping areas. That the Métis, like current Métis leader Ken Hudson's family, were kicked out of the Park in 1923 caused tensions over park hunting rights that continue today. Their attempt to ensure Métis rights, including that of hunting and trapping, has been bolstered by a recent Canadian Supreme Court Ruling (Powley, 2003).

The trappers usually came in to Smith for Christmas, often the whole group from Salt River or Fitzgerald traveling in together with all their teams decorated with ribbons, bells, *tapiz* (fancy, colorful, embroidered dog blankets), and a standing iron decorated with fox tails or wool and ribbons. The Salt River group always stopped on the timbered ridge behind Bell Rock for tea and lunch, making several fires, "So much people around the camp fires. Laughing, dogs barking, getting ready to go. Then they come to town." The stores would be open until 11:30 on Christmas Eve and then they'd all go to Mass, the dog teams lined up outside the church, dogs barking, their bells ringing. On both:

> Christmas and New Years Day they'd have a feast, different houses. Anybody comes around, have a feast . . . So nice to be a kid, you can go from one place to the other . . . Oh Christmas pudding, there's nothing like it. . . . and on New Years as soon as it gets dark they start shooting, everybody shoots, *everybody*!"

When they went in to Mass everyone left their rifles, with the shell bag tied to it, outside and no one would think of touching them. Coming out, the shooting would start again. For Frank, however, the very best Christmases were not when he later had a government job and knew his paycheck was coming steady but rather as a young man when he had been out trapping with Germain Tourangeau for a month or more before Christmas. Coming into town he knew his wife would be waiting, the house all ready and decorated with a tree. And for the husband:

> There's nothing like it, feeling in a man's heart coming in for Christmas knowing your wife's at home with the kids. And you got a bag of fur for your family for Christmas. Coming in, sometimes you're on the road, three o'clock in the morning, have dinner at daybreak. There is *no* feeling like it, trapper coming for Christmas.

The importance of Christmas and New Years in the winter and coming in after the spring hunt and around treaty days in the summer were special times for getting together, seeing friends and families, telling stories, eating, getting married, gambling (hand games), and dancing. The spring hunt was usually a good time in the bush.

> They go *all* over the country. Not on the road. They know these lakes. I got to camp right with 'em, travel with 'em, dog packs. And they head for a beaver lodge, female beaver already had pups, so they sit there, first one come out of that hole is male, they shoot that one.

Effort to conserve beaver stock was also stressed by Louis and Mary. Coming in from the bush after the spring hunt you could hear the drums at Salt River before you got there as people were beginning to arrive for the fish run, making dry fish. As in many places Frank mentions, the land has changed, water has dried up, fire has burned an area, or prairies are now grown up in poplar. Behind the Salt River settlement where it's all bush now was once a prairie. Suze Marie told Frank how coming in from the spring hunt, when he got to the edge of the prairie he

> unloads his twelve gauge, five shots, and he unloads his rifle and *everybody* down there shoot. They say they know who's coming next. That's a message they send back, that your home and family's all OK." And once you got there, with the people gathering, gambling, and dancing . . . Talk about laugh . . .

Discussion

In presenting these accounts I have tried to show how *interconnected* the stories and the relationships found in those stories are. This is an essential aspect of community history. These connections are there even in the case of families or Aboriginal organizations where political tensions or divisions exist today. I have also tried to illustrate the interview participant's emphasis on the good way of life as experienced by Elders. That this was a good and complete way of life was stressed repeatedly. Yet the hardships that occurred were not diminished either. Nevertheless, it was important for these Elders to get the message across that *they weren't pitiful*. They weren't cold, wild, and starving in the bush as the stereotyped picture portrays. When there were difficulties they knew what to do whether through bush skills, knowing who could help them or who held particular kinds of knowledge, or through remembrance of storied options. Knowledge and spiritual systems of their own were essential underpinnings to their choices.

Some of the most difficult of experiences were the frequent deaths from imported disease and epidemics over the years. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century disease was often spread as the boats wound their way from north central Alberta to Aklavik in the Mackenzie delta. In the first half of the twentieth century, TB became common, often attributed by Indian agents and government health officials to the victim's own behavior (DIA, 1911, 1913). In Ft. Smith patients were sent to the Mission hospital and isolated. After the opening of the Charles Camsell Hospital in 1946, TB patients were sent to Edmonton, often for a year or two at a time. With little effective treatment, Arthur's pride in his mother's ability to use roots to cure his brother was evident as was his pride in their own skills, in being able to get what they needed from the bush, and that we knew something that white people didn't. For others it is simply respect for the stories of the abilities that these people had, using their minds, knowledge, and relationships with all beings to cure, foretell, and heal.

All of the interview participants were affected by death due to disease, most loosing several family members this way. And they all mentioned the more recent illnesses: the effects of alcohol and other addictions. Four of the six interview participants drank themselves at one point and they all had family members who suffered due to alcohol. Alcohol was also a site of control by government and one that is remembered with much bitterness. Many people were arrested and held in cells in the past due to what is now described as the over-zealous pursuit of liquor law violations often due to the prejudicial attitudes of the RCMP at the time. Participants all related mixed feelings about the church and its history with the people, citing both the help and harm received, the hard work done for the people and the experience of advantages the church received at their expense such as the land sales referred to by Frank as "Bishop Breynat's land claims." The hard work of many of the sisters, brothers and priests was commented on and the caring for the many orphans, as a result of parent's early death to disease was appreciated; it was consistent with the local values that emphasized of caring for orphans and elderly. However, the after effects of schooling that left some children abused and others unable to do well on the land left very mixed feelings about the church.

Issues related to identity were referred to repeatedly. This was not in terms of their own understanding of who they were — they knew who they were — but in terms of the changing legal and strategic nature of ethnic categories as defined by government. Being Métis, as illustrated from Amelia to Arthur to Maryanne, took varying economic and cultural forms. The participants spoke in narratives: none of them used strictly chronological forms and all of them told about people who contained history through their own story and by the way they lived. Family relationships and background were of utmost importance to all and remain so today.

Of the families involved in these interviews all had members who had been leaders in the past or more recently; all but one of them mentioned having people who "knew something" in their family in the past. Three of the participants were related to old man Beaulieu and another's wife was a Beaulieu. The two that were not had other well known early boat men or Métis names in their background including Cayen, Mercredi, Tourangeau, and Daniels. Most also had traditional Cree or Chipewyan names in their family genealogies. However, it is important to remember that the name itself does not determine current ethnicity, as is the case in the well known name of Beaulieu for which there are Métis, Cree, Chipewyan, Dog Rib, and Slavey descendents.

Only one of the participants had a primarily town rather than bush background. Emilia, who had never lived in the bush, did not present the "bush consciousness" of the others (Scollon & Scollon, 1979). Louis has what would be called a predominately bush consciousness while Emilia grew up in a period where Métis men like her grandfather, Pierre, worked as traders. At the same time several of Emilia's brothers turned to trapping when the trading and freighting work engaged in by their father and grandfather was no longer an option following the increased hiring of white men after WWI. However, her brother Rene was able to switch back to working for parks and government when the option opened up again. Of the other five, the pace and activities of life on the land and what they learned there was an essential aspect of their identity, how they saw themselves and what they considered important. Finally, issues of status, influenced by the economic and social values of the time they grew up in, were evident in many of their descriptions of self, family, and community. Thus for the six interview participants, the presentation of land and the yearly cycle, people and family, and the knowledge/power to connect it all was what made for history. They were not simply telling their life stories. The answers received were in response to the issue of history. The participants varied not only in the degree to which they grew up on the land but also the degree to which their mind set was based primarily in the oral tradition like Louis, or writing like Emilia who was an avid reader and had a book/journal she had written.

To Arthur what was most important was being part of the well-known Beaulieu family, the healing medicine of his parents and grandparents, the medicine stories and power of the old Beaulieus, and the sharing and reciprocity of relationships in the past. History was about reciprocity and people who could do things and how "if you can do something, if somebody asks you do this for me, you just go a head and do it." For Emilia, the story of Ft. Smith history is that of the boats, the portage, the river and the fur trade as her relatives experienced it and of the Catholic Church and its interaction with the Métis community and her extended family relationships. Mary, a strong advocate for the importance of maintaining the Chipewyan language, chose to tell about the way they lived when she was a young girl and what they did throughout the course of the year, as did Maryanne and Frank. In response to my question about history, Maryanne begins "at the start" with her mother's death and then quickly goes into a description of the yearly round, the way they made their living. Presenting history as tied to the yearly cycle rather than as a progression starting from ones birth or dates of events is common among subarctic peoples. To Maryanne and Mary the way they cooked and were organized and clean in everything they did, while wasting nothing, is an important aspect of the way people made their living on the land and an essential aspect of understanding history. History occurs then in both the repeated patterns and the transmission of knowledge required for making a living which stressed the way they lived, their relationships with others, and the knowledge they held. Truth, learning, and knowledge were very important to Louis, especially how he learned from his father. For Louis the best times in his life were with his father. His father's stories, extensive bush knowledge, and the spirituality that accompanied this life are important as history. Frank told me many things but he chose to start with the story of the York Boat men of his youth. While Frank has been widely interviewed and has testified vociferously at hearings regarding plans for the diseased buffalo, in this interview he told that story only when triggered by how it related to disrespect for the men he was talking about. The great respect and love for the old men who taught him as a boy, whose stories he heard, and whose ways he observed by accompanying them in the bush is what he considered history.

In summary, what was presented as history is embodied in lives and the ways and experience of living a good life in the bush and in the town. It was a good life, not a pitiful life, no matter how difficult some things may have been. The number one thing people wanted to talk about is how they lived and learned on the land, the second on the systems of knowledge used to do so, and third the interconnected family relations that maintained it all. Other common thematic areas are included in the table below. Following that a list of community values prevalent when the participants were young is included, followed by quotes on good ways to live from some of the participants and their parents. They reflect the following comment by Raymond Beaver, "If you ask any Elder in this town what they would like to see for their grandchildren they will answer, it is a return to traditional values" (R. Beaver, 2004). Francois Paulette (2000) holds that, "We need to continue to live by traditional values, not necessarily traditional technology." And Eileen Lines (2003) says, "I want my children to know the traditional values to help them know who they are without having to go through as much as I did to find that out."

We weren't pitiful.	Pretty good living, almost heaven. We weren't really poor them days. Clean, organized, they all had their own systems. Old people were strong then.
In their time, my time,	We had great history in their time, great runners, great trappers, great boatmen, great leaders, great history. I'll never see them days again. In my time.
It's from the land we live, long time ago.	And it was a good life, On the land, Gee it was nice. The trapper knows every little place like the farmer knows his land. That was *our* land. That's how we made our living.
We knew something.	What I was told was very important, old people pretty much all had something. We had very powerful medicine men. Dreaming, seeing ahead, healing.
And the truth was in it.	All that I told you is from those Elders, it is the truth. Honest hand down stories. That's how we learned They claim, according to, my father seen it. He told me so much stories, You have to do it to know it.
Bush knowledge.	When you hunt them, more come. Animals tell you. Watch the wind, sight and hearing. On the land it was a good life. We used everything, we could make medicine from plants. Trees are growing where we used to trap, the river is different now.
Those old people, we learned from them.	Francois Beaulieu, Pierre Squirrel, Pierre Mercredi, Paul King Beaulieu, Suze Marie, Johnny Paulette, Germain Tourangeau Marie (Beaulieu) Mercredi, Victoria (Cardinal) Beaulieu, Bella Beaulieu, Eleanor Jeremie
We got along then.	Everybody was the same, We're all one people, work together. I'm related to all them, We are one big family.
Talk about laugh.	It was happy times. So much dancing. Games. Lots of laughing and teasing, funny stories. Coming in for Christmas and after the spring hunt. Treaty days Ohhh people used to live right then.
In some ways they did right, in some ways they done wrong.	They're helping orphans, the sisters and kindly old brothers helped us. Residential schools, selling our land, kissing Bishops ring, announcing trappers donations at Christmas Eve Mass.

Table Three: Major Interview Themes

Teachings/Values

- Animals look after you, so you treat them good.
- Don't make fun of people or animals, treat them with respect.
- Watch everything in the bush, some day it will help you.
- Don't interfere with others (choice)s (including those of animals).
- You don't say anything unless they ask you what you think; if they do then tell them straight.
- Don't tell lies, do just like those old people, they tell the truth.
- Just tell how you see it, how it happened.
- Learn how to use your body and keep it strong.
- Don't just sit around, keep working even if you're old, that's what keeps you healthy.
- Work hard and help each other.
- Share what you have, don't be greedy.
- Be positive and don't judge others.
- Respect yourself by how you act and how you take care of yourself.
- Watch how they do it, listen good, think about it, and try it yourself.
- To know how to do it takes doing it.
- Teach others who want to learn. Show them how to do it.
- Don't get angry with them when they're learning. If they make mistakes show them again and let them try it again until they have it right.
- Good comes to children from being around Elders. Spend time with older people.
- Children should not run around yelling when adults are talking.
- Children should go to bed early.
- If you need help ask someone for it. If someone asks you for help try to help them.
- Always help widows and take in orphans.
- Don't speak too loudly about what you do.
- Don't brag like you're more than other people.
- Don't laugh too hard, pretty soon you'll be crying.

- Help yourself and be at home. Don't expect other people to serve you. They are glad to see you but they are busy.
- If you want to do something, make up your mind and then just do it.
- Don't just sit around or only talk about it.
- Don't feel sorry for yourself.
- Love yourself, acknowledge the good or bad.
- Always be respectful of yourself and how you present your self.
- Keep your self and your home clean.
- Keep things clean and organized in the bush and in town.
- Be patient with each other, especially the youth and the older people.
- Even if you just help one person it is worth it.
- Money isn't everything.
- Always have your door open to those in need.
- Try to have fun together in a good way.
- It's good to spend time together sitting around the fire and talking/laughing
- Love God in your heart.
- If you pray when you're in the bush you won't feel like you're alone.
- Don't trap or work hard on Sunday.
- Respect your parents. In the old days, "If they said something, you did it."
- If something is telling you to do something or not to do something don't fight against it, listen.
- Listen to your dreams, things that are telling you something.
- Teach your children a good way of life.
- Tell your children about the people you respect and what they did.
- If you have nothing good to say about someone, just don't talk about them.
- Take your time and think about what you want to say.
- Think before you speak about how to explain it good and in a way that doesn't hurt others.
- Don't take more than your share, whether it be meat or the animals in the bush.
- Always leave the best for others, the good you do will come back to you.
- Never forget what those old people told you.

- Always keep in mind the unborn generations and the land and animals before making a decision.

Living these values was understood to lead to a good and long life. Further comments on values are listed below. It is important to note that while I have made lists of these values here, values were learned and reinforced by leading the life in relationship with others and through experience in the bush and in the community.

What They Said

- If you can do something, if somebody asks you do this for me, you just go ahead and do it. You don't have to brag about it just like you're more than other people. That's not the way to live. You just go so far, huh. That's the way we used to do it, I'll help you with something, you help me. Arthur Beaulieu.
- Never think of yourself as better or less than anybody. You may be different but you're not better than your brother. Eleanor Jeremie
- It could be the ugliest guy, you don't say no. You don't know what's in his heart so don't judge by his looks. Eleanor Jeremie
- Too often the land is abused. Don't take more than you need from the bush or the land, such as trees, birds, wild animals. Elsie Yanik
- Don't hate people or make fun of them, you might end up marrying someone like that or your children might. Agnes Beaver (Beaulieu).
- When they say something [about you], don't worry about the words, count the words you like. Johnny Paulette
- If you do something good you don't have to talk about it, the other people will talk about it for you. Magloire Beaver
- If you don't do anything, you don't have anything. Magloire Beaver
- Never lose a day, that day is gone. Isidore Mercredi.
- Always pray, you don't necessarily have to be in church to pray. You can pray anywhere. Magloire Beaver
- Arthur's parents were good, especially her, she gave all her meat away. Maria Brown
- People have to talk to their children and try to help them. Veronique Paulette

It is great good fortune that we still have our frontier land in which pioneers may struggle and build, where they may dream their dreams of empire, and eventually write on pages now blank the story of those realized dreams (Stefansson, 1922, p. 241).

CHAPTER FOUR, NARRATIVES OF GREAT HISTORY: THE NORTH BECOMES CANADA

Introduction

Produced in 1979 as a local history by the NWT Department of Education, *On the Banks of the Slave* refers to the area as a wilderness, without history, prior to the establishment of Hudson's Bay post at the end of the Slave River portage in 1874 (Department of Education, 1979). Written by local educators and students, *On the Banks of the Slave* is a thoroughly colonial document. For example, the building of the first tennis court for government staff merits both text and a photograph, while Treaty 8 and the chief and headmen who signed it are not mentioned. From this perspective history starts with contact and the written record; prior to this native people led a "simple" and "precarious existence" (Dept. of Education, 1979, p. 74).

For the Dene and Cree people of the subarctic, however, history begins with creation, with environment, and with the need for shared skills. The essential skills of both men and women are required, who together with the animals sustain a good way of life thorough proper conduct. For the Métis in this region history begins with family and with the interconnected stories of family and making a living on northern waterways. Stories of how the world began, or of when animals and people could speak together or how the river was affected by giant beavers are not included in post-contact, published versions of history. Nor are the Chipewyan versions of the early contact stories of Thanandaltheur or Mattonobee, or the Cree trickster stories of Wisakecahk, the Métis stories of P'tit Jean or those of the men of the boat brigades. At the same time, a great deal has been written about Ft. Smith in the accounts of traders, adventurers, priests, and government officials. The Ft. Smith men most frequently mentioned in these texts are Francois Beaulieu (II), Joseph King Beaulieu, Pierre Mercredi, and Pierre Squirrel. Yet what is told is not really their story, as men from a particular background and location, but the story of their interaction with or within the setting of Western institutions of religion, trade, markets, and government. The stories of women are even harder to find in fur trade texts (Van Kirk, 1980; Brown, 1980) or in the accounts of later travelers.

This chapter explores comparative Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal perspectives on local history. I will review the interpretation of history found in Euro-Canadian texts and government documents and the meaning of that history to the people involved, including the impact on the identity, motivation, and well-being of the people of Ft. Smith. This examination will allow us to explore the background and assumptions of the people and institutions that came north to further the aims of exploration, trade, religious conversion, government administration, social assistance, and economic development of the people and resources of the north. For the most part I refer to popular accounts and secondary sources rather than archival data in the following discussion. The time constraints of this already broad study were one factor. More importantly, I was most interested in seeing how these events were presented in popular histories. Thus, I chose to review examples from accounts that were influential either because they were widely read or had an impact on Canadian policy and the attitudes of the police, bureaucrats, and educators who came to northern communities to work. At times the same writer played both roles as is the case with Steffansson. An American anthropologist born in Manitoba, he wrote many popular and anthropological works on the north, including his well-known book, *The Friendly Arctic* (1921). Steffansson (1922) was an avid promoter of the north as a region rich in development opportunities. He was instrumental in the promotion of the US effort that led to the construction of the Canol pipeline during WWII (Barry, 1985), an event that had a major impact on Ft. Smith. Like Stefansson many northern travel and adventure accounts made strong and often biased statements about locations and people only briefly observed; a number of them were bestsellers (Butler, 1872/2004, 1873/2004; Cameron, 1909/1987; Waldo, 1923), and many are still in publication today (Butler, 2004a, 2004b; Cameron, 1987; Mackenzie, 1999; Pike, 1892/1999).

What was it that drove such a proliferation of accounts? What motivated these authors and what values were embedded in their descriptions? Toke Munn (1932) in his account of his travels in the north describes the north as the "last great west" (p.8) while Canadian historian Morton (1960) writes that for Canada, the north has always been its frontier and is essential to Canadian identity. Coates and Abel's (2001) comment in their introduction to their edited text on northern history provides one example: "The North is the Canada that was, the Canada that could have been, and the Canada that is not" (p. 21). This envisioned "North" often elicits strongly held statements which we continue to debate. The recent draft of Canada's Northern Strategy (2004) begins with: "The North is a place of great promise." Prime Minister Martin agrees announcing: "We believe the time is right to launch a new era of development and transformation in the North" (Office of the PM, 2004). This North, however, remains for the most part framed as imagined rather than as experienced. As I will show, however, even for those who experience the north powerful assumptions continue to constrict what it is they see.

The perspectives on northern history presented in the accounts reviewed for the purposes of this research, reflect the meta-narratives of north current in their time, yet they also are instruments for the construction and maintenance of that narrative (McCormack, 1993, 2004). They, for the most part, reflect the same set of assumptions that led Morton (1960) to say that Canadians, are called, "to make something, of a grim, but a challenging, a tough but a rewarding proposition, our north" (p. 88). This belief was often a justification for these writer's personal attitudes and efforts. An interest in "otherness" as we try to come to grips with, control, or imagine richly the degree of difference or similarity in our worldview may also have motivated some writers. Alternately, producing a text may reflect a matter of lack of fortune as in the case of Samuel Hearne and other retired traders, the need for personal fame as in the case of Mackenzie and Franklin who both ended up knighted, or a combination of fortune and fame on the lecture circuit as in the case of twentieth-century northern promoters Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Richard Finnie. For more than two centuries, most of these writers would still concur with the perspective of northern development promoter Davies (1947) when he wrote, "The North – promise and enticement. When will it be conquered by man?" (p. 139). Whatever the motivation, certainly the vision of north and the needs of northerners formed in the popular imagination was influenced by these accounts. As a Ft. Smith professional said to me just recently, "They [Southern Canadian professionals] are still coming here with their ideas of how to save us without listening to what we have to say." Reification of views of north and northern people remains prevalent as an aspect of Canadian identity despite efforts to broaden or restory the picture.

Based in their own values and experience, local people have their own understanding of place, of the changes occurring, and of the people involved. They have their own knowledge systems and methods for sharing this information. As Frank Laviolette indicated in talking about fur trade history, "I know some been written about it, but that way we never use, how they got the story is hand down." In subarctic knowledge systems experiential, first hand knowledge is privileged over second-hand knowledge as text and second-hand knowledge only used as qualified by the closeness of the relationship to the source (my father) or the reputation of the teller (Chief Squirrel) (Rushforth, 1994). Without the validation of direct witnesses Frank Laviolette was careful to say: "They claim" rather than "I know' or "according to Boniface Boucher history." Original sources then are held in first hand experience and in relationships, not in text and reading about experience.

Today many northern peoples have found that film is a way to bridge these gaps (Geddes, 2003). As Yukon filmmaker Geddes notes, northern storytelling through film may have both an informative and a healing role. In some ways this option presents us with a dialectical set of images meant to challenge the transmission of histories cited within one perspective only (Benjamin, 1968). Stories are being committed to film throughout northern Canada. Francois Paulette dreams of telling the story of Chipewyan leader Mattonobee, without whom HBC explorer Samuel Hearne would never have found his way by foot to the Coppermine River and back. In partnership with a group of English film-makers, he has been working towards getting the funding required since he played the role of Mattonobee in a Yellowknife production in the mid 1980's. While the movie hasn't been produced, a script has been written. Francois is confident that this story will be told, that there is much value in doing so, and that there are many more stories to tell.

This chapter covers a number of subjects. Euro-Canadian accounts of travel and trade are discussed in the first half of the chapter. The second half covers how perceptions of the North, often with roots in these accounts, influenced government administrative, regulative, and development programs. The impact this process had on alternatives available to groups of people, each with a perception of history that led to vastly different conclusions and responses, is introduced here and discussed further in the final chapter. All of the topical areas presented could be developed as a full work on their own. In this case, however, they are presented to provide a general overview of the perceptions and attitudes of Euro-Canadians about the North, northern peoples, and what to do about them. They have been chosen and used as illustrations of the dynamics and perceptions behind the actors of the time rather than as definitive discussions of any one of these topics. By doing so, a genealogy of current community interaction can be explored.

The Fur Trade and Early Explorers

In his classic text on the fur trade, Innis (1927/1999) suggested that the history of the fur trade could be seen as the "history of the contact between two civilizations, that of the European and the North American" (p. 388). Innis' "line of contact", however, was not a very solid line, a moment in time, especially in the Northwest; it represented interaction between two, or more, very different societies rather than between more or less complex societies. While Innis (1927/1999) describes Aboriginal people as having an "insatiable desire" (p. 388) for European goods, most traders in this region, especially in the early years, would beg to differ (Hearne, 1795; Rich, 1938). This was particularly the case for the Dene for whom the caribou were such a substantial and complete resource (Hall, 1989).

The fur trade has been described as the most pervasive force influencing the economic and political development of western Canada between 1660 and 1870 (Innis, 1927/1999; Rich, 1969; Zaslow, 1971). It has been suggested that the initial trading relationship had some rough equivalency and reciprocity as each group needed what the other could provide (Innis, 1927/1999; Rich, 1969). Sufficient cooperation between them was required to meet the ends of both traders and trappers. Ray (1974) holds:

> although it was not an equal partnership, nor one in which the same group always held the upper hand, at no time before 1870 would it have served the interests of one party to destroy the other since by doing so the aggressors would have been deprived of their supplies of goods, or furs and provisions. (p.xi)

In the case of what is now the Northwest Territories the fur trade continued over a hundred years longer. In the Northwest Territories, as Rene Fumoleau (1974/2004) has so elegantly presented in his discussion of Treaties 8 and 11, the federal government's perception of the need to do anything about these lands or peoples was put on hold. A perceived American threat in the form of Klondikers traveling the Mackenzie route to the Yukon along with mineral potential stimulated a response in the form of Treaty 8. This pattern of surges of renewed interest in the North was repeated at the time of the Norman Wells oil rush in 1920-21 and the negotiation of Treaty 11 and following the American involvement in the WWII Canol pipeline misadventure. In between were periods of neglect by Canada and of leaving things to the "old hands": the Hudson's Bay Company, the missionaries, and the RCMP.

In the Athabasca/Mackenzie region Peter Pond began the localization of the fur trade in 1778. Prior to this time, Chipewyan middlemen took furs from the region all the way to Ft. Prince of Wales on Hudson's Bay. As Mackinnon (1980) notes, "By crossing the famous Methy Portage (La Loche) into the rich Athabasca region, Peter Pond caused a fur rush. Soon posts were established as far as Great Slave Lake" (p. 21). Although there is said to be no record of Pond's first trip to Great Slave Lake other than what he verbally told Mackenzie (Innis, 1930), Francois Beaulieu, the patriarch of Salt River, remembered this event and the role his family took as French intermediaries at this meeting. He gave an account of the event to Father Emile Petitot late in life (see Appendix A). Soon the region was to become "the richest fur district in the western part of the continent" (Ray, 1974, p.126).

Finding this new route allowed the North West Company and other Montreal based companies to outwit or at least to out-portage the Hudson's Bay Company. The XY and then the Northwest Company (following the merger of the two companies) dominated trade in this region until the merger with the HBC in 1821 (Mackinnon, 1980). However, "with the expansion of the fur trade into the Athabasca, the whole ecological situation changed from that of the pre-1763 period and the resources of the forest alone could no longer support it [the trade]," (Ray, 1974, p. 126) thus requiring an even more complex system of supply logistics. Because of the predominant importance of the river system in exploiting these resources and given the provisions and supplies that must be brought in to support the brigades and posts, changes in technology and transportation that could reduce costs associated with the long canoe journey to market were of great importance not only regionally but to the national economy (Innis, 1927/1999, 1933). "The legacy of the fur trade has been an organized transport over wide areas especially adapted for handling heavy manufactured goods going to the interior and for bringing out a light valuable commodity" (Innis, 1933, p.6), a dynamic exemplified by the evolution of transport technology on the Ft. Smith portage.

During the period from 1770 to 1940 a number of "epic journeys" by explorers and fur traders, challenging expeditions by sportsmen and surveyors, and steamboat style adventure travel by early twentieth century tourists all passed through Ft. Smith. They include Back, 1836; Cameron, 1909; Douglas, 1914; Franklin, 1859; Hanbury, 1904; Hearne, 1795; Ingstad, 1933; Mackenzie, 1801; Pike, 1892; Seton, 1911; Vyvyan, 1926; Waldo, 1923; and Whitney, 1896) among others. Frustration with local people, particularly in terms of their willingness to work as guides, to engage in trading fairly, or to stop considering property as jointly owned when traveling together are dominant themes in their writing. At the same time dependence on these same people as guides, boatmen, steam boat pilots, cooks, and interpreters was very real. One can only imagine that the attitudes portrayed were not hard to discern and that the frustration was most likely mutual. The following account of George Back's interaction with a group at Salt River in 1833 is a good example. After two previous trips as an officer with Franklin's 1821 and 1825-6 expeditions, Back was back. In an attempt to obtain directions to a barren lands river (later renamed from *Thlew-ee-choh* or Great Fish River to the Back River) Back describes the following encounter of his leave taking from a group at Salt River whom he refers to as Slave Lake Indians:

> The tout ensemble of these "people," as they with some vanity, style themselves, was wild and grotesque in the extreme. Half naked — their hair in elf-locks, long and matted — filthy beyond description — and all squalling together. To complete the picture, their dogs, scarce one degree below them, formed a sort of bodyguard, on each side of the river; and as the canoe glided away with the current, all the animals together, human and canine, set up a shrill and horrible yell. (Back, 1970, p. 79)

Back describes the leader, Camarade de Mandeville, whose father was a "Canadien" (French Canadian fur trade employee), as having been exasperated with the hours of questions put to him regarding river routes through the barren lands first by local HBC trader McLeod followed by more questioning by Back.

> I could not help smiling at the Camarade, who, puzzled and distressed at the many positions in which I requested he would place himself, so as to give me an idea of the bearings of what he was describing, at last rather peevishly exclaimed, "that we did not place the world as it was; whereas he kept steadily to the rising and setting sun."(p.82)

Backs' understanding of his task as exploration is strikingly different from Frank Laviolette and Arthur Beaulieu's point of view regarding explorers. Asking me if I knew that Francois Beaulieu drew a map on birch back in Ft. Chipeywan for an explorer (Back, 1836; Franklin, 1823), Frank laughed, and went on to say:

> And they named the river. I know a lot of Indians that put it that way, talk about it, Chipewyan way. They say, 'This white man never made that river, the river was there.' And he [Beaulieu] took him to Pacific too.

Old Man Beaulieu

As Frank makes reference to, Francois Beaulieu did serve as a voyageur with Mackenzie down both what was to be renamed the Mackenzie River (from Deh Cho or Big River) in 1789 and on Mackenzie's second trip to the Pacific Ocean in 1792-93

(Woolacott, 1927). However, this Francois Beaulieu was likely the voyageur father of Salt River's Francois Beaulieu whose mother was Ethiba, a Chipewyan woman. The Elder Francois and his brother Jacques had apparently lived in the Great Slave Lake region for some years by the time Cuthbert Grant and Peter Pond arrived in the mid 1780s (Hanks, 2000) (see Appendix A). Arthur Beaulieu describes the original Francois as having both a French and German background. Francois the first eventually returned to Quebec. His son worked both for the Northwest Company as a post hunter and interpreter and with his relatives in the bush, often acting as a middle man and taking furs to the posts.

A very large man, our Francois Beaulieu (II) served as a "bully" (1816-21) for the Northwest Company at the time of the bitter rivalry between the HBC and the NWCo. (Rich, 1938). One of the duties of a "bully" was to serve as the champion in fighting matches between representatives of the two companies. George Simpson, in Ft. Chipewyan with the HBC in 1820, was told that Beaulieu had threatened to beat him if he stepped out of the HBC's Ft. Wedderburn (Rich, 1938). Francois has been held responsible for at least one death during this period in response to the drowning of one of the NWCo. men by an HBC employee (Duchaussois, 1923). Apparently in another case he refused NW traders McGillivray and Keith's efforts to get him to kill Clarke of the HBC in exchange for Clarke's wife and possessions (Rich, 1938). He is said to have killed others later in conflicts over furs or women and in tribal clashes. This was also a time when liquor and extras of tobacco, dogs, and other gifts were used freely to keep both the company's men and the Indians on side. These extra incentives were cut back following the 1821 merger of the two companies. Beaulieu traveled out to camps in the bush for the NWCo. in order to try and beat the HBC to the furs, using intimidation tactics and/or alcohol to get the furs rather than letting them go to the opposition (Rich, 1938). This pattern was long established as noted by Alexander Mackenzie (1801/1971), of the NWCo.:

> The Indians, therefore, to procure the necessary supply, were encouraged to penetrate into the country, and were generally accompanied by some of the Canadians, *who found means to induce* [italics added]the remotest tribes of

natives to bring the skins which were most in demand, to their settlements, in the way of trade. (p.i)

John Franklin (1859) found Beaulieu the younger, an interpreter for the NWCo. at Ft.Chipewyan in late March of 1820. He described him as a "half breed, who had been brought up amongst the Dog-ribbed and Copper Indians (Yellowknife)" (p. 85). Interested in routes to the Coppermine River, Beaulieu "sketched on the floor a representation of the river," supplemented by a drawing of the coast-line by Black Meat, a Chipewyan. Franklin (1859) later describes their map as "tolerably correct" (p.85). George Back, Franklin's second, is more generous in his description and praise of the detail in Beaulieu and Black Meat's drawing (Houston, 1994). Francois Beaulieu was of considerable importance as a guide, interpreter and support man for Franklin's second expedition (1825). Arthur Beaulieu explained that while Franklin might have been a prince in England, a sort of king of the white officers and the Canadiens he led, that his great, great grandfather Francois Beaulieu was definitely the king of the Métis and Indian men who got them there and was called King by the white officers in recognition of such. His sons then kept the name and passed it on.

After this period and the amalgamation of the two companies (1821) Beaulieu trapped and traded furs, often traveling as far as the Great Bear Lake area to gather furs from the people there. He would then bring the furs down to one of the Great Slave Lake posts or to Ft. Chipewyan, where the prices were better, thus frustrating the north Mackenzie HBC posts. As a result, he was hired to work with the Dog Ribs for the HBC rather than for himself (M. Devine, 1998; Hanks, 2000 McCarthy, 1995). Beaulieu was influential in Dog Rib, Yellowknife, and other Chipewyan communities, often cementing ties through marriage. He is credited with attempting to alleviate the tensions of the 1820s between Dog Ribs and Yellowknives that eventually led to a peace treaty in 1829 (Abel, 1993). By the late 1830s he had established a base for the group of people he led at Salt River and was trading in the local salt. His group, including his many wives, children and other men and families associated with him, has been described as a tribe or tribe-like. Heather Devine (2001), in her work with the Desjarlais family in northern Alberta, refers to this phenomenon as a "proto-Metis hunting band" (p. 129). However, local Métis clearly reject the "proto" and refer to the

Beaulieu and Mandeville family groups as the source of the local Indigenous Métis community established in this region well before the settlement of Red River (M. Devine, 1998; South Slave Metis, 2000).

Beaulieu's reputation in this part of his life was that of a man who would take what he wanted, whether by intimidation or force — be it furs, a woman, or leadership (Hanks, 2000; Li & Scollon, 1976). He was known to have very powerful medicine. Both Francois Laviolette and earlier Francois Mandeville recount stories of Beaulieu's intimidation of others and of his simply taking any woman he wanted (Li & Scollon, 1976). Arthur Beaulieu, however, explained it differently:

> well he was a good hunter him, that old Beaulieu. That's why they give him a woman now. They all get together and stay. Him was hunting, killing moose, getting moose, killing everything like fur. Then these chiefs now they give their daughter to him. Finally he end up with nine wives. He end up with nine wives.

Joking that he wished he could be that lucky, Arthur also acknowledged the need to be a very good hunter to keep such a large family fed. Whatever the case, local sources agree that he had between seven and nine wives and "never less than three." Further, they all agree that while he gave up most of his wives when he converted to Catholicism, as the priests required, he really didn't give them all up, that he and his first wife Catherine St. Germain (daughter of the Canadian, St. Germain) lived in his house while one or two others lived in a smaller house next door.

Curious about the priests and the strength of the French religion, the religion of his father, Beaulieu traveled to Portage la Loche (Methy portage) in 1845 to hear Abbe Thibault and have his children baptized (McCarthy, 1995). Oblate historian, Duchaussois (1923) describes this voyage as Old Testament like:

> Thereupon, Beaulieu, like Jacob of old (Gen xxxi 17), rose up, took his children and his wives in his longest and largest canoe, and went his way southwards to La Loche Portage, with many followers. (p. 86)

When young Father Tache traveled as far north as Chipewyan in 1847, Beaulieu and his family traveled south to hear his sermons there and have his children baptised himself. Promising to give up all but one of his wives he came back the following year to be baptized. Francois' conversion with his large family and followers was a coup for the church, giving them a solid base in the Mackenzie (Duchaussois, 1923; McCarthy, 1995). The first priests to come into the Mackenzie often spent several months at a time living with the Beaulieu's while learning Dene languages before going on to Missions further north (McCarthy, 1995; Duchaussois, 1923). This connection with the Oblates made the HBC traders anxious due to the ambitions of the Oblates and the independent trading of Francois. Defying the Hudson's Bay Company in 1857, Beaulieu took a load of furs all the way to Red River and often worked on his own or for independent fur traders.

Following his trip south, afraid that other Métis would unite with Beaulieu in competition to them and in light of the Company's suspicions that the French Oblates were buying furs on the side, the HBC tried, once again, to control Francois. At one point HBC trader Anderson recommended getting other Indians to kill all the animals around Salt River (Bellman & Hanks, 1998). However in the end, grumbling about it, the traders usually hired him or his sons just to keep them on side (Hardisty, 1870). The HBC also gave Beaulieu a pension "to quiet the old man and prevent him from doing mischief" (Hardisty, 1869). Beaulieu had developed the new route through the rapids over Mountain Portage and still controlled access to the extra carriers and boatmen required, something the HBC couldn't ignore (L.Ruttan, 2004a).

Arthur, Emilia, and Frank all took pleasure in recalling Francois' reputation for outwitting the HBC. Referring to him as "the Patriarch," "old man Beaulieu" or "that old Francois" they recalled "that they [white men] never beat him." They were also proud of his later reputation for piety, mentioning the deeply worn path to the large cross where he prayed every morning and evening. The cross, dislodged by a flood after his death, is said to have floated away coming to rest on top of Francois' grave (D. M. Smith, 1995). Beaulieu is described by Father Faraud as having, through his conversion, regained the gift of tears and to have prayed for forgiveness for the rest of his life (Duchaussois, 1923). Francois, himself, said mass in his house and gave spiritual advice when there were no priests available (Duchaussois, 1923). Despite his age, he traveled to the Nativity Mission in Ft. Chipewyan or to Ft. Providence to hear Christmas Mass (Hardisty, 1869; McCarthy, 1995). His devotion to prayer was noted by everyone and he was depicted as a prime example of the capacity of Christianity to turn a savage in to a saint. Early Oblate historian, Duchaussois (1923) describes Beaulieu as, "although practically Indian" (p. 86) in lifestyle as being "far more intelligent" (p. 86) yet also more "terrifying" (p. 86). Beaulieu's conversion was seen as a miracle of God's making; his story was used by the Oblates as a model in the local narrative of salvation.

It is likely, however, that he also retained his reputation for medicine power. During a strike of boat men in the 1860s, the old man, then in his nineties and hardly a physical threat, had only to look at the men all the while sharpening his knife before they jumped back into their boats (Weekes, 1949). The possibility of the continuing inheritance of medicine by some of his family was referred to in both Arthur Beaulieu and Frank Laviolette's accounts. Francois is the ancestor of many of the Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis people in the Ft. Smith area uniting family backgrounds across current categories of ethnicity. Beaulieu's story has been narrated by the Oblates as a model of piety and leadership and by his ancestors as one of knowledge and resistance. That he took on the HBC and was never defeated, given the increasingly less balanced relationship between trader and trapper, was a matter of pride to his descendants. Yet despite his contributions his family is little noted in the recent popular revisions of the journeys of explorers or in plans for reenactment celebrations in recent years (Steele, 2004; Hayes, 2001).

The Beaulieu family, over the years, continued to be influential. The strain of being both dependent on Beaulieu's sons and grandsons for guiding and intermediary services accompanied by resentment of their independent and far from servile attitude was a frequent theme in the written accounts of traveler after traveler well into the 1930's. Warburton Pike (1892), an English sports hunter after musk oxen, described his guide Joseph King Beaulieu (Francois' son) and his family including Arthur's grandfather, Paul King Beaulieu, as "always after his masters' possessions" and worse:

> In character a Beaulieu is a mixture of a very simple child and a German Jew; all the lack of reason of the one combined with the greed of the other, and a sort of low cunning more like that of an animal than a human being . . . The

> only way to treat him is as a dog; if you are kind to him he takes it as a sign that you are afraid of him and acts accordingly. (Pike, 1892/1917, p. 23)

Traveling in 1899 Mair, of the Treaty 8 party at Ft. Vermillion, also mentions Joseph,

> There was another character on the Vermillion stage namely, old King Beaulieu . . . King Beaulieu himself was Warburton Pike's right-hand man in his trip to the Barren Lands. He had his own story, of course, about the sportsman, which we *utterly discredited* [italics added]. (Mair, 1908/1999, p.96)

After this response Joseph enjoys telling them they can take their treaty and shove it, he is a free man, a Métis free to take scrip instead (Mair, 1908/1999). Mair also mentions scolding one of Joseph's sons, probably Paul King Beaulieu, who he suspects is a poacher; he calls for immediate steps to punish poachers of "the last really wild" buffalo on the continent.

Ernest Thompson Seton, the well-known naturalist, describes being warned against the Beaulieus and then finding that grandson Sousi (Joseph) Beaulieu was both a cheerful and prompt guide on a trip looking for buffalo near Ft. Smith (Seton, 1911). However, he complains bitterly about the insubordination of another Beaulieu grandson, from Ft. Resolution who, hired for a trip to the barren lands, he ends up hitting. Complaints about the sharing of food were common. Pike (1892/1999) and Seton considered the Beaulieus, their guides in the Great Slave Lake area, notorious "for considering their masters' possessions their own" (1981, p. 23). Cultural beliefs regarding sharing, using food when they had it rather than saving it, and previous experience with, from their perspective, the white man's miserliness probably influenced their behavior. In the end, Seton (1911/1981), agreeing with Pike (1892) and Hanbury (1904), writes that they (the Beaulieus and other Métis) combine "the meanest qualities of a savage and an unscrupulous money-lender" (p.196). More flexible than the others, surveyor Guy Blanchet (1964) travels on Great Slave Lake and out to the barren lands with another Sousi Beaulieu in the summers of 1923 and 1924. Blanchet (1964) has no major complaints. He describes the family as having "a strange mixed inheritance" (p. 34). Referencing then current theories, Blanchet attributes leadership qualities to their white heritage: "The blood of the Frenchmen of the brigade had run thin through successive Indian mothers but it had preserved strong qualities of leadership, ambition, and a certain truculence" (p. 34).

Thus Francois Beaulieu and his descendents have been seen as saints and sinners, as both bullies and protectors of orphans and widows, and as exhibiting traits of leadership and independence attributed to both Native and French heritage. Francois Beaulieu himself is reported to have told Petitot with pride that the blood of three peoples flowed through his veins: Chipewyan, Cree, and French. His numerous descendents, including those of Métis, Chipewyan, Cree, Dog Rib, and Slavey backgrounds, have an even wider ethnic background than his own. When asked to tell a group of high school students about Beaulieu, Arthur laughed saying, in reference to Beaulieu's powerful reputation, that he didn't want them to be afraid, "to run away from him," or "to get any ideas either" referring to Beaulieu's many wives. Nevertheless, Beaulieu remains a model of leadership, independence, and spirituality and continues to influence community identity today.

Accounts of Travel and Adventure

In the accounts of later travelers, often sports hunters looking to shoot bison and musk oxen or the series of steamboat adventurers that followed, Ft. Smith is invariably given very short shrift. This is perhaps due to the commonly expressed perception that Ft. Smith is a less scenic location, as compared to Ft. Chipewyan, or to the inevitable "mud, dust, flies, and delays" on the portage (Mackinnon, 1980). Pike (1892/1917) traveling in 1890 refers to

> Fort Smith, in spite of its fine situation on an open flat high above the river, is the most disreputable establishment I came across in the North, and the contrast was more striking as most of the forts are kept rather smartly. (p.19)

Over thirty years later, Helge Ingstad, a white trapper originally from Norway (and later of l'Anse Aux Meadows, Newfoundland fame) also has few positive words to say about Ft. Smith. It simply did not fit his image of an adventurous place.

> Neither Fort Smith nor Fitzgerald is a place to arouse the visitor's enthusiasm. There, for the millionth time, one encounters the scourge of the Northland — the mosquito and the bulldog fly. Before long the newcomer looks like he were

> suffering from a bad case of the boils. Nor are these places much to attract the eye. Everything about them smacks of itching, scratching, boring half-civilization. (Ingstad, 1933, p.16)

Ft. Smith was usually seen as simply a place to get through and to acquire the resources, usually human and/or animal (horses or dogs), to go on with the next stage of the journey. Nevertheless, all of these accounts mention Ft. Smith as travelers usually had to spend time here waiting for guides or for the northbound steamer to arrive and depart.

Northern adventure and travel texts were amazingly popular in the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. The titles of the books are illustrative of the perception that the writers and their audiences held at the time. U.S President Teddy Roosevelt's favorites were those written by English military officer, William Butler (later Sir William): *The Great Lone Land: A Tale of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America* (1872/2004a) and also *The Wild North Land* (1873/2004b). Butler is described as pro-native in the introduction of the 1968 edition of *The Wild North Land* and his winter trip as, "the saga of man's matching of strength and wits against the menace of an ice-bound northern wilderness" (McCourt, 1968, p. xi).Written in 1873, *The Great Lone Land* was already in its 17th edition by 1910 and new editions of both books were published in 2004. Butler's first trip was the result of his report, commissioned by Ottawa, on conditions in the Canadian Northwest. It included recommendations for establishing Canadian law in the region, contributing to the formation of the RCMP (McCourt, 1968). Butler's (1873/1968) vision of the future was based on then current theories of extinction.

> A great deal has been said and written about the wild man of North America. The white Man during many years has lectured upon him, written learned essays upon him, phrenologically proved him this, chronologically demonstrated him that, ethnologically asserted him to be tother! . . . Thus while the doctors differ as to what he is, or who he is, or whence he came, the face of theory changes to the stern tragedy of fact; and over the prairie, and upon cloud capped mountain and northwards in the gloomy pine forest, the red man

> withers and dies out before our gaze: soon they will have nothing but the skulls to lecture upon. (p.124-126)

Although Butler only got as far north as Ft. Chipewyan he had much to say about the region and its people. Butler, as had others, including Doctor Edwards of the Treaty 8 party in 1900 and much earlier Alexander Mackenzie, in clearly racist terms describes the Chipewyan as exceedingly ugly (Butler, 1873/1968/2004b; Mair, 1998; Mackenzie, 1801/1971).

> To assert that they are very plain would not be true; they are very undeniably ugly. Some of the young ones are very fat; all of the old ones are very thin. Many of the faces are pear-shaped; narrow foreheads, wide cheeks, small deep-set *fat*[italics original] eyes. This type is said to be Mongolian, and if so, the Mongolians should change their type as soon as possible. Several of the men wear sickly-looking moustaches, and short, pointed chin tufts: the hair course and matted is worn long. The children look like rolls of fat, half melted on the outside. Their general employment seems to be eating moose meat, when they are not engaged in deriving nourishment from the maternal bosom. (Butler 1873/1968, p.127-128)

This preoccupation with the age of weaning, given prudish Victorian norms, was mentioned by many travelers including Agnes Dean Cameron (1909) traveling down the Mackenzie by steamer in 1908.

Cameron (1909), however, describes Chief Squirrel as a "very astute chap" (p. 148) and talks with him on the question of the day, "Why are the buffalo declining?" She accepts his answer regarding the impact of wolves; RCMP Inspector Jarvis and Seton traveling just a couple of year's earlier do not (Seton, 1911). They note that the stories of the number and size of the wolves supposedly destroying the buffalo gets larger and larger the closer they get to Ft. Smith heightening their suspicion that poaching was the real cause of the apparent decline in the population. In Butler's, 1873 account he mentions the large number of buffalo killed to feed the posts, an ongoing practice since the early days of the NWCo. (Ferguson & Laviolette, 1992). In Frank Laviolette's story about the York boat days he recalls the making of pemmican for the brigades to pick up as they travelled north as part of the overall supply routine (see Appendix D). Victorian era travelers out for big game wanted to shoot muskoxen; they also wanted to hunt buffalo (Pike, 1892/1917; Russell, 1976; Whitney, 1896). Louis Beaver and Frank Laviolette refer to the larger estimates of buffalo populations by Chief Squirrel and other local hunters in the early twentieth century. Louis recounts his father telling him of Squirrel's frustration in taking out a group of what Louis refers to as biologists and geologists by horseback in the 1920's to where they might see bison only to have the bison keep moving always a day or two ahead towards the Caribou Mountains where Louis' father, Magloire, later finds them. Finally, due to lack of provisions, the party had to turn back without any sightings calling into question Squirrel's current estimates and his description of a major die-off many years earlier.

Steamboat traveler Waldo (1923) recounts Captain Mills' portrayal of Agnes Dean Cameron as being taken in by tall tales, while failing to realize his own similar errors. A few years later, English traveler Clara Rogers Vyvyan was to have the same experience. Arriving in Ft. Fitzgerald on an early June evening in 1926, Vyvyan (1998) remarks that "it looked quite a township" (p. 204) compared to the other settlements seen since leaving Waterways, Alberta with its "stores with square ends, false wooden fronts over gables to make them look more imposing" (Vyvyan, 1998, p 204). That evening at the HBC Factor's house (Leggo) in Ft. Fitzgerald, the "talk dribbled on of steamers, delays, Indians, wind, trappers, Eskimo trials, furs, wireless, etc." seemingly "quite another world to the one we have left behind" (Vyvyn, 1998, p 204). Although an experienced traveler, Vyvyan (1998) must have looked pretty gullible because she certainly had her leg pulled several times during the week she spent in the area. Billy McNeil (Mary Heron's father) told her, as he drove her across the portage in a horse drawn wagon, that he had used buffalo to draw the wagon a few years earlier. I suspect even Angus Brabant, the HBC Factor in Ft. Smith who hosted them around, had a twinkle in his eye as he described Chief Squirrel as having gone around in paint and feathers only a few years earlier (Vyvyan, 1998). While Squirrel looked disappointingly contemporary in his blue serge suit and nautical cap, nevertheless Vyvyan (1998) reports she could see the "gleam of ancient fires in his eyes" (p. 35).

She did, however, notice two interesting things: "the country is full of notices, along the main trails are white canvas notices nailed to trees in Indian characters" (p. 205) and that the notice on the billiard room next to Conibear's store in 1926, said in English, "No Treaty Indians allowed in," "No minors allowed," and "No bad language" (Vyvyan, 1998, p 205). Ernest Thomas Seton, in Ft. Smith twenty years earlier, also mentioned the common use of Chipewyan syllabics not only for bibles but for leaving messages (Seton, 1911). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the use of syllabics brought literacy in their own language to Cree and Chipewyan speakers that diminished by the mid-twentieth century. For example, the well-worn bible belonging to Louis Beaver's grandmother, Sophie Beaver, indicates perhaps greater literacy than Louis, frequently out of school and in the bush trapping with his father, holds.

In these travel accounts authority is based simply on the experience of having been there. On "having seen with my own two eyes" as it were, however brief and cursory that seeing may have been. Yet at the same time exploration and travel accounts as a genre are often written in light of the authority, fame, or monetary rewards anticipated (Keith, 2004). This means that drama was highlighted and the everyday discounted in this genre by both editors and readers of the time (Keith, 2004; Daniel, 1971). As Brown (1993) and Keith (2004) note, this contrasts with the usual journal accounts of explorers and fur trade personnel which usually cover every day accounting of trade, weather, illness, and supply. This difference does not make these accounts of traders or travelers useless but does require contextualizing what is presented.

In his article on the veracity of fur trade travel texts Keith (2004) uses Adams' criticisms of travel literature in the 18th century as susceptible to the errors influenced by motivation including vanity, cupidity, and prejudice — a useful model to keep in mind when considering these travel accounts (Keith, 2004). Further the shaping of the narrative was often heavily influenced by editors whose knowledge of the north was entirely based on popular perceptions of the time as well as on an eye to what would sell (Keith, 2004). In some cases, as in Mackenzie's work (1801/1971), the editing is minimal (Daniel, 1971); Mackenzie stresses the texts veracity, without embellishment, in his introduction. In others the editing appears to be heavy. For example, Hearne's published version of his journeys is quite different in tone from his original journals (Payne, 2001; Rollason, 1998). Rollason (1998) particularly notes the difference of the more moderate treatment of Chipewyan women in the journal as compared to the eventual text which sensationalizes Chipewyan men's treatment of women as "beasts of Burden" and the spoils of men's quarrels, something that was to haunt later depiction of Chipewyan women (Rollason, 1998; Sharp, 1995; Steckley, 1999). As late as 1977, the seventh edition of anthropologist Diamond Jenness' (1932/1977), based on Hearne, continues to depict Chipewyan women as "mere pack animals" (p. 386). In the early twentieth century, as the following vignette shows, Chipewyan and other Aboriginal women in Ft. Smith enjoyed life in their own way and refused categorization as servants. This account represents another genre of northern writing that of twentieth century traders, officials, and their wives.

"Domestic Relations"

People used to love to dance, whether it was at a Cree tea dance at Salt River or the Métis favorites, jigging and square dancing at Fitz. All the old people remark on how much fun they had, "so much fun." As Louis Mercredi put it: "We were mad for the dance" (Metis, 1977). At the same time, these social events were not seen the same way by the non-Native population who usually had their own idea of entertainment: dinner, drinks, and cards at home where talk would flow about their experiences and also about the people of the north. Socializing across cultural groups proved difficult often related to issues of status and bias. Yet one of the things often mentioned by older people in Ft. Smith was the coming together of the whole community at Christmas Eve Mass and in the house to house visiting taking place at Christmas and on New Years day.

Maria Brown is especially known for her love of dancing as her story below illustrates. She provides a vivid account of how her own love of dancing developed:

> It was 1932 we moved from Fort Fitzgerald to Fort Smith. In Fort Smith there was always dancing. I remember the first time I went to a dance. My mother

> ordered a new dress for me from the catalogue. It was a beautiful yellow dress. The dress was puffy on the shoulders, had a sash tied on the waist, and was long. It was so pretty for me. After I put on my dress, I put on my moccasins. I was dressed so nicely. Then I went to the dance.
>
> When I arrived at the dance, a young man whose nickname was Gegil took me by the hand. "Let's dance the jig?" he said. So we danced the jig and it was a lot of fun. From then on, I loved to dance the jig as a young lady. Curly MacDonald, who was older than me, he and I started dancing together. We danced well together. When we danced it seemed like our feet didn't even touch the floor. When Curly and I danced no one would cut in. After we became very good dancers, Curly said to me, "From now on, we are not dancing until they collect the money for us."
>
> So before we started to dance, they collected money for our dance. When they collected $20 for us, it was $10 each. We thought we were very rich. Then we danced the Red River Jig for the people. We almost killed ourselves dancing the Red River Jig. People said we were the best dancers, so we felt very happy. (Brown, n.d., p. 17)

Jean Godsell's (1959) account of a wedding dance taking place around the same time as Maria's story is, in contrast, quite different in tone:

> No sooner had the fiddlers tuned up than a bevy of silk and tartan-clad beauties, each with a "diamond" tiara atop their raven locks, and reeking of eau de Woolworth, paired off with their prançing partners. As the hours slipped by coats and sweaters were jettisoned by the perspiring dancers and tiaras sat rakishly in every direction on the ladies heads as the boisterous throng thumped and pounded their bibulous way through the usual northern dances, whilst the air grew thick with tobacco smoke, to say nothing of the redolent aroma of lemon and vanilla extracts – and Listerine! . . . It's certainly hell what civilization can do to these Indians! I shook my head. (p. 199)

Mrs. Godsell (1959) describes the enthusiastic response of "dusky squaws . . . ancient crones and giddy flappers" to the introduction of mail order catalogues as "an attempt to ape the ways of their white sisters" (p. 200). She exclaims at the audacity of

Elizabeth Mercredi (Emilia's mother) who asks to borrow the money required for the up front payment required by catalogue orders (rather than credit cashed in with furs as was usual in the north) and to pay it off in housework. This lack of empathy and emphasis on difference is portrayed throughout Godsell's book, *I Was No Lady*, which emphasizes her own hardiness. In recounting this wedding dance, Mrs. Godsell makes fun of the bride's white wedding gown given that she and the groom already had a seven year old child, particularly remarking on the incongruity of the black oxfords and brown woolen stockings worn by the bride. Further, Godsell (1959) holds that the resentment of Métis women towards her, was due to their awareness that

> once their place was usurped by women of the acquisitive and dominating paleface race they would be relegated to a position of more or less obscurity, completely shorn of all their power and glory. (p. 35)

The bitterness, racism, and isolation in Jean Godsell's story are as apparent as is the joy of recounting youthful memories in Maria Brown's account.

This is not to diminish the isolation felt by these women some of whom were brought by their husbands straight from Europe to northern communities. For women out in trapping cabins with their "white trapper" husbands it could be even more difficult, sometimes resulting in tragedy as in the case of thirty-five year old Minnie Oulton. Living on the Slave River at Pointe Brule in 1925 and increasingly isolated while her American husband and two older sons were out trapping, she shot and killed her sixteen-month-old baby and attempted to kill herself and her ten-year-old son (Kelcey, 2001). Apparently she followed the boy who after being fired on had run down the trail until he met his older brother coming home. Pulling her dead daughter on a sled, the gun was finally taken from her by the older boy and she was taken into town and sent out to an Edmonton hospital (R. Beaver, 11/2004). Interestingly, when I asked if Magloire Beaver had said whether she was mentally ill, I was told by Magloire's son Raymond, that he didn't speculate on it: "My father didn't say if she was. He didn't know her that well. He wouldn't say anything like that unless he knew it to be true himself" (11/2004).

While not to this extreme, many white woman living in the community over the years struggled with isolation, depression, and cabin fever in the winter months

(Abbott & Kehoe, 1972; MacLean, 1989; McInnis, 1986). Kelcey (2001) notes that, in general, white women in the north during the nineteen twenties and thirties used each other for support, but that Ft. Smith appeared to be the exception to this rule. The jealousies of status within the non-Native community in Ft. Smith, with its Government House and RCMP headquarters, were ripe. Official visitors traveling the river who stopped at Fort Smith were expected to be hosted by families with the most status: this was often a cause of friction (J. Godsell, 1959; Vyvyan, 1998). The fierce competition between the HBC and the "free traders" at that time meant that there were barriers to friendship with other white women or high status Métis women due to their husbands' business rivalries (J. Godsell, 1959; Zinovich, 1992). In Ft. Chipewyan, Louise Rourke (1928), wife of a HBC trader, writes of a kind of friendship with her cook, Dora Villebrun, as an aspect of sheer survival. While living in Ft. Fitzgerald, where she was rejected by the white and Métis wives, Jean Godsell developed the same kind of relationship with Rosa Mercredi.

Arriving straight from England, Louise Rourke struggles to reconcile her romantic ideas about North American Indians with the reality she finds in Ft. Chipewyan (Rourke, 1928). She finally finds someone she considers a "true Indian", a 90 year old man who still wore a breechcloth (Rourke, 1928). On the other hand, Waldo (1923) praises Ft. Smith Indian Agent Gerald Card, who he describes as the overseer of "a pack of red children," for marrying a white woman rather than a squaw, "a dusky chattel . . . with no mind of her own" (p.93). In the meantime, as Maria Brown got older she, like Mary and Dorothy Laroque before her in the case of Jean Godsell, found that while she generally liked cooking for camps and work crews she didn't like cooking for white women who gave orders and didn't understand her own Métis family's significance in the community.

Almost all the accounts of northern travelers mention the "terrible, greasy food" served by the women in Ft. Smith. In contrast, Emilia Gratrix (Mercredi) recalls the terrible customers, telling a story of how she fixed one of them, a government bureaucrat who ate regularly at the café (Gratrix, 2003; Green, 1996). While eating at the café one night one of the other customers, a local man, was talking about how good muskrats were. The bureaucrat promptly exclaimed his disgust at the thought, stating that eating one was something he would never do. Emilia, who had often been glad enough to have muskrat to feed her children, laughed to herself (Green, 1996). The next night she served him dinner and when he remarked on how good the chicken was, Emilia laughed even harder knowing she had just served him his first muskrat. In contrast to many of the jobs available in the mid-twentieth century, cooks whether in town or in work camps, usually knew they had power. They were essential and a good one was not easily replaceable. Maria Brown recalls walking out on the government manager of one camp in the 1960s for a remark she took to be a slight to the cleanliness of her kitchen, something she prided herself on. However, she went on to say that even though she got along well with people from all backgrounds, this person was particularly prejudiced and she'd already had enough. Earlier Laura Loutit (McLeod), twenty-five years older that Maria, had ended up as a servant in Anglican Canon Vale's household in Hay River when she was nine rather than attending school as she had expected. In later life she felt the same way about who she would cook for. No matter who asked her to work for them, she made sure she cooked in situations where she had some independence. Laura, Maria, and Dora Tourangeau, all excellent cooks, were known to walk out if their employers didn't treat them right, leaving women like Jean Godsell remarking on their improvidence. Maria and Laura often spoke of their pride which meant they didn't want to work for or be beholden to someone they didn't like and who obviously had little respect for them.

Uniting the disparate group of expatriate whites, as is typical in many colonial situations, were complaints about the difficulty of hiring workers, the incomprehensibility of the behavior of local Aboriginal people, and how to change them (J. Godsell, 1959; Rourke, 1928). The last two continued to be a topic of dinner parties throughout most of the twentieth century, as did the phenomena noted by Jean Godsell: former northerners now finally retired "outside" or "down south" sought each other out for social company even when they hadn't gotten along while in the north, their common northern experience something that southern Canadians had little interest in (J. Godsell, 1959).

Many local men worked as "chore boys" and as sled dog drivers for these same families. For example, John James Daniels worked as a chore boy for the Godsells and the HBC while the Godsells were living in Ft. Fitzgerald. As Jean recalls:

> One morning as a result of a home-brew hangover, John James was late. When he finally appeared, around eleven o'clock, I ordered him to get busy at once. Slinging the pails at the end of the neck yoke he disappeared down the trail, to return an hour later, empty handed. Again I spoke to him. When for the third time he failed to do my bidding Phil told me to tear into him and give him "hell." "He's just trying you out," he remarked. "Wants to see how far he can go with you. It's a typical Indian trick. Give him *hell*," he reiterated. "If you don't master him now you never will."
>
> Never will I forget the look of stupefaction on John's face when I finally sailed into him. Although almost big enough to eat me, he simply burned up the trail between the house and the river. Filling the barrel to overflowing, he then dived for the woodpile and loaded the huge box until it wouldn't hold even an extra sliver.
>
> From then on, on my husband's advice, I gave him what for on an average of once a month. Often I had to make an excuse for doing so. At first this seemed rather mean but I soon learned as everyone does who handles Indians, that it was the only way to keep him in line. As a result, John James would, ever after, have gone to Hades and back for me if I had told him to do so (pp. 44-45).

In contrast, Frank Laviolette and Métis Elder, Archie Laroque, speak with respect of Daniels' skill as a bush man and tripper for the Hudson's Bay Company, going out to the bush and getting the furs before anyone else (Maldaver, 1993). Frank speaks of John James as a man who was respected and who had a certain status in the community, while Mrs. Godsell speaks of a boy, a mischievous boy who one is somewhat fond of but who must nevertheless be kept in line.

Jean's husband, Phillip Godsell, a HBC Inspector during his time in Ft. Fitzgerald and Ft. Smith, published several books about his thirty years in the north, including excerpts about the years in Ft. Smith (P. Godsell, 1938, 1939, & 1946).

Phillip Godsell was an avid collector of Indian memorabilia from all over western and northern Canada; he enjoyed dressing up in traditional Indian clothing and engaging in reenactments of great HBC events. His writings and collection are a classic example of what anthropologist Rosaldo (1989) refers to as "imperialist nostalgia" where the agents of transformation romanticize and mourn the loss of what they took part in destroying (Rosaldo, 1989). Recently, a non-Aboriginal government employee remarked to me that in some ways he regrets current political and economic development which "takes the mystery out of the north"; "imperialist nostalgia" is not totally a thing of the past.

Despite his "admiration for the Red man" Godsell (1938), refers to the Chipewyn people of the region as, "'a mean, selfish race, very much addicted to grumbling and bemoaning their difficult lot" (p. 250). He derides their inability to really stand up to anyone who shows a little strength. On the other hand, he admits he admires John James Daniels, a Métis, who he categorizes as a "good Indian." While recovering from a serious illness he is required to go on an eight-hundred-mile patrol of the Great Slave Lake HBC posts and must depend on Daniels.

> Often during my travels throughout the North I have found that many a true and faithful heart beats between a tawny skin. Never was it better exemplified than upon this occasion: John James, my native dog-driver, displayed a tenderness and care towards me I shall never be likely to forget. His kindness and devotion on that trip will ever linger in my memory, and it only served to deepen the regard I have always felt for the original owners of this land, and for the inherent nobility which is so often part of the Red man's character. (P. Godsell, 1946, p. 247)

The struggle between extremes of romantic and racist notions when confronted with real people was a common theme in this type of account.

Years earlier, English explorer Franklin (1859) also complained of the "servants," as fur trade employees were referred to. Their independence was hard for someone from the English upper class to understand. He expresses frustration with the lagging behind of his independent Ft. Chipewyan guide, who without consulting him stayed behind in the previous night's camp in order to help a friend with a moose hunt.

Franklin (1859) was amazed that although the man caught up with them the next day, "on his return this evening he made no endeavor to explain the reason of his absence, but sat down coolly, and began to prepare his supper" (p 80). The Chipewyan and other Dene are known for their independence and non-interference in the business of others (Scollon & Scollon, 1979). It is likely this man, knowing that Franklin was on the right track, did not consider it his responsibility to be there for every step. Thirty years later English military officer Butler (1873/1968) had the same attitude,

> My servitor, not content with living as his master lived, was helping the other rascals to the precious fare. English half-breed, French ditto and full Christian Slavey had apparently formed an offensive and defensive alliance upon the basis of a common rascality, Article I of the treaty having reference to the furtive partition of my best white sugar, flour, and Souchang tea: things which when they have to be "portaged" far on men's shoulders in a savage land, are not usually deemed fitted for savage stomachs too. (p. 165)

Reference to "dusky natives" is common in the popular accounts of travelers and traders in the first half of the twentieth century, so common that two of the books reviewed for this study published a drinking song (The Ice Worm Song) about a "husky, dusky maiden" said to be popular amongst white men in the north (Gillham, 1947). In looking back, this preoccupation with darkness is found from the earliest accounts, including Mackenzie's account of his late eighteenth century trips (Mackenzie, 1801/1971). Mackenzie presents himself, in the heroic tradition, as traveling in an area which had "never before borne any other vessel than the canoe of the savage" traveling in areas "where a European had never before presented himself to the eye of its swarthy natives" (p. xix) The amount of effort required was heroic in the classic sense yet, from the perspective of the local men working for him, the time frames he set the group made little sense; he, and later Franklin, were seen to have, in many ways, caused their own troubles.

Men continued to work as guides and chore boys for the increasing number of government employees into the 1960s. As Frank Laviolette remarked,

> Those government officials had it on gravy before, you know. They don't even make fire in their furnace, just office work. People stay up all night to keep the

> fires going. Put the wood down in the basement in the daytime. At night they keep the fires going. All they do is sleep, go to the office.

The new area of town developed for their homes was referred to, ironically, as the "Welfare Centre" by local people as the government employees had it so easy. Most positions were held by outsiders with, in 1960, only Joe Bird breaking through as the carpentry manager. For Frank Laviolette, Chief Gibot, Mary Heron, the Birds and others in the 1960's this meant organizing. Frank Laviolette was encouraged in this effort both by Alberta Aboriginal leaders and by a young priest. This was the same Father Camille Piche who at Frank's wish came from Winnipeg to officiate at his funeral last winter (2/04). In the 1970s young men like Francois Paulette (Chipewyan), George Kurszewski (Métis), and Henry Beaver (Cree) and others continued this process in the form of land claims and Aboriginal rights. They would persevere for another thirty years.

Missions

In 1849 Father Faraud, the first priest in the Mackenzie region, said in regards to his mission "I know I am bringing divine light, into the icy air I am bringing the fire of divine love, into the shadow of death I am bringing divine life everlasting" (Finnie, 1942, p. 47). Twenty years later, in France in the winter of 1867-8, Bishop Grandin, in search of badly needed recruits, fathers, and lay brothers, required to continue this vision, uses the following argument to articulate his vision:

> In the country from which I come there are many men who lead hard lives, who suffer many privations. And for what? To collect the skins of wild beasts! Not a pekan's [fisher's] pelt is lost, not a fox's tail! We look for something better. We have a nobler mission and a higher reward. We seek to win souls to Christ. We go into the wilds after those whom he calls his lost sheep, and with his blessing we lead them into the one fold of the one Shepherd. Who will come over and help us? (Duchaussois, 1923, p. 11)

These Christian missionaries saw their task as changing history by bringing hope and salvation to a desperate people. Deloria (1999) holds that the "Christian religion and the Western idea of history are inseparable and mutually self supporting"

(p. 303). In Canada, this mutually supporting combination of historical and religious process resulted in: first, the establishment of missions as a civilizing aspect of what the north could become and later the church-administered and state-legislated and supported residential schools. The goal of these schools was assimilation of Indian and Métis children into the Canadian whole. It was assumed this would inevitably result in the disappearance of what were viewed as backward and non-progressive Indian cultures. Any justification given was couched in the terms of the benefits to Indian children of religious salvation and of the civilizing influences of an education grounded in Western history and culture (Grant, 1996; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999).

Priests came north first, both the Catholic Oblates and the Anglicans; then schools and hospitals were established. That the northern Catholic and Anglican missionaries worked hard under very difficult conditions of travel and sustenance, language and cross-cultural dynamics is without question. This is also what they expected as part of their personal life narrative. As Father Jousssard put it in 1884, after a dangerous trip between Ft. Smith and Ft. Resolution at freeze-up, during which he had met an old man hoping for a blessing before death, "Do we not receive ample compensation for any sufferings to which we expose ourselves for the sake of our poor and dear and faithful Indians?" (Duchaussois, 1923, p.210).

Most of the people interviewed for this study mentioned, whether they agreed with the Mission purpose or not, that the Grey Nuns, who they saw as often powerless in the hierarchical church system, worked hard. They worked in community and hospital health care, in producing food and clothing, and in education (Sutherland, 1996). Mission schools were established first in Ft. Providence and later at both ends of the Slave River system, one in Ft. Chipewyan and one in Ft. Resolution. An Anglican school was set up in Hay River. In Ft. Smith, a day school was opened in 1915 by the Catholic mission. Some of the children associated with Salt River and Ft. Fitzgerald were sent to school at one of the residential schools at Ft. Chipewyan and Ft. Resolution while other children remained with their families in the settlements or in the bush and did not receive schooling. The views on northern children and their education held by the Oblates were cited in popular texts including Waldo's (1923) travel account and Finnie's (1942) text on northern development. The sense of mission presented is one of salvation from savagery.

> The first thing to be done for school children in the North is to give them a thoroughly good washing. The poor blear-eyed little creatures arrive in rags, and filthy rags, crawling with vermin. An hour later you would take them for pretty white children. But they first have to be made white! (Duchaussois in Waldo, 1923, p. 98)

As successive Bishops pointed out, both day and residential schools were continually hamstrung by inadequate funding from Ottawa ($.03/day in 1902, $.16/day in 1910) (Duchaussois, 1923). The Department of Indian Affairs saw health, morality, and vocational education as benefits of these Christian efforts (Department of Indian Affairs, 1911). This was the attitude held regarding education until the post WWII period when a vision of northern modernity began to influence educational philosophy and policy. Prior to this time Aboriginal people were expected to continue living pretty much as they had while miners, engineers, and civil servants would come from the south (Dickerson, 1992). In a report for the NWT commission in 1934 completed by Dr. Urquahart, a physician, the parameters of education were outlined. They included a focus on the three R's, greater emphasis on manual training than previously, and discontinuing school by age twelve for boys and fifteen for girls so that they could be either out on the trap-line or in the home learning sewing skills (Dickerson, 1992). Earlier, the residential schools had kept boys in school until age fourteen and girls two or three years longer.

Like the Hudson's Bay and the Northwest Company, and the French and English, the Anglicans and the Catholics continued a pattern of conflict between two institutions for Aboriginal people, their lands, their resources, and their souls (Choquette, 1995). In Ft. Smith the Catholics won this contest; the Oblates established St Isidore's Mission first in Salt River and in Ft. Smith in 1876 (Duchaussois, 1923). Rather than rely on the HBC, who suspected their values and foreignness as French and had directed its people at Portage la Loche not to help the priests over the portage, they developed their own provisioning systems (Abel, 1993; McCarthy, 1995). Under Bishop Grouard and Bishop Breynat's leadership the Oblates eventually grew their own food, built their own boats, were given an allowance to hunt buffalo for provisioning their institutions after the establishment of WBNP, and later piloted their own airplanes (Breynat, 1955, McCarthy, 1995; Zaslow, 1988; Leising, 1959). Until the early 1980s, as the headquarters of the Mackenzie diocese, a full complement of nuns, lay brothers, priests, and a bishop were located in Ft. Smith. Services were held at both the small, wooden, St Isidore's church (1923) (preferred by many Dene and Cree people) and at the soaring cathedral completed in 1964. In 1926 Clara Rogers Vyvyan describes a church service at St. Isidore's, decorated with tinsel and paper flowers, as having been conducted in both French and Chipewyan by a bearded French priest. He spoke on God's love while, to her eyes, the native parishioners looked on, totally uninterested (Vyvyan, 1998). Nevertheless, many accounts of piety and love for the church and its teachings were reported not only by missionaries but by the people besides (Sutherland, 1996). Not working on Sunday was common even among trappers out in the bush.

Today St Isidore's is no longer in use but is preserved as part of a mission heritage park. The cathedral, built under the leadership of Bishop Piche with the expectation that Ft. Smith would become the capital of the Northwest Territories and that the region as a whole would boom, holds regular services. The large cathedral struggles to survive financially due to a diminished church-going population and extremely high heating costs. For many years it was the Friday night bingo in the church basement that supported the heating costs, but as perception of the impact of bingo on families changed the bingos were discontinued. Mary Heron remembers that her children attended all kinds of church-run activities for the children in the fifties and sixties, which helped her with her children a great deal. "I always knew where they were" recalls Mary. Eileen Lines remembers how much fun roller skating or playing bowling in the large, cement-floored basement was. At that time, in 1958, there were one hundred and nine Grey Nuns in the Ft. Smith and Mackenzie diocese (Sutherland, 1996).

Yet people's perception of the church and its interaction with the people over time is conflicted. Many older people cite the value of the church to them personally and the care they received at the residential schools from the sisters. The importance of prayer and religion as essential to their view of life's values are upheld. For example, Charles Kennedy whose mother (the eldest daughter of Elizabeth and Isidore Mercredi) died when he was young, remarks on the hard and caring work put in by the sisters at the residential schools, "seven days a week, three hundred and sixty five days a year" (Sutherland, 1996), while others remember the bad food, restrictive conditions, and the abuse that they or others suffered, some with lips still shut tight against what was not to be told.

Bishop Breynat's land dealings were also mentioned critically. The church obtained a large area of land when the mission was first established. While Aboriginal families like the Beavers were allowed to build homes in certain areas, they were simply told to leave when cash was needed and the land sold out from under them, usually to non-Aboriginal newcomers. The government also purchased large pieces from the Church to build the public schools.

Still upsetting to many older community members was the resituating of the crosses in the Catholic cemetery in the mid-1960s. Frank Laviolette, who lived nearby, spoke of seeing a new, grey-haired priest one day and a machine that broke up the earth being used and all the crosses all in a pile. He went over to the priest who said he had made a map of where the graves were but they never were right after that. Buster Daniels also spoke of this, almost forty years later, saying that it still hurt him that he didn't know exactly where his mother was buried. Four of the Elders interviewed mentioned critically the Christmas Eve services where the trapper's donations were announced to the congregation, an immense form of social pressure. Noting that often the money would be placed by a baby doll representing the infant Jesus, Arthur Beaulieu laughs that "that baby angel, they have in a little basket there . . . that angel just a doll, he won't need that money." Yet he goes on to say that the money was used for good purposes: the care of orphans and helping people out. But then, laughing again, he says, "but them, they're drinking wine right in front of you!"

Health

From looking at church records McCarthy (1995) notes the following illnesses in Ft. Smith over a thirty-year period:

1889 - Five adults and one child die within two weeks in February,
1894 - Death of 18 from scarlatina,
1902 - Six deaths from measles in one week in June, more follow.
1909 - Many deaths from unknown epidemic illness,
1916 - An epidemic of gripe,
1919 - Many deaths from Spanish flu,
1921 - Smallpox and flu from June to the end of August, many deaths
1928 - The great flu epidemic, many deaths.

This is however a vast under representation of conditions not only in the settlements but also, as it does not include what is happening in the bush with the "Caribou Eater" Chipewyan who traded at Ft. Fitzgerald. Epidemics and diseases were common throughout the nineteenth century. An influenza epidemic of what HBC trader Smith refers to as without parallel was brought north by the boat brigades from Norway House in 1835 (Abel, 1993). Deaths of children from whooping cough in the north were common in 1857-58 (Abel, 1993). Father Emile Petitot (1883) indicates a drop in the Chipewyan population of at least a third in the Ft. Chipewyan area between 1862 and 1879, attributing this change to "hunger and misery" (p. 652). The flu epidemic estimates in 1928 ranged from 300 to 600 deaths for the Mackenzie (Abel, 1993). In this case, Dr. McDonald, the only doctor for the region, was away on a trip south and the medical supplies ordered the previous year were not loaded on the first boat of the season which brought the flu with it although the liquor orders were (Abel, 1993).

In their report submitted to Parliament in 1899 along with the signed treaty, Treaty 8 Commissioners mention that a specific request for a doctor was made at the negotiations in Ft. Smith. A year later Edwards, a doctor accompanying the 1900 Treaty 8 commission, writes that:

> I am the first Government doctor ever here . . . Everyone is coughing. There is an epidemic of bronchial irritation and there is also an epidemic of chicken

> pock [sic] –grown up and young are often frightful to behold so numerous are the postulous [sic] scabs . . . I noticed that where a good meat diet prevails there is an absence of scrofula [form of TB], that curse of the Indians in other places, and where we find it is where they have ceased to live on wild meat and have taken to bacon and flour which is not a good food for these people, but [it] is especially where they live much upon fish that the scrofulous trouble prevails. (Leonard & Whalen, 1998 p. 86-87)

In other words the Chipewyan ("Caribou Eater's") coming in from the barren lands were healthier than people living in the settlement of Smith's Landing (later Ft. Fitzgerald).

Travelers passing through Ft. Smith and the Slave and Mackenzie regions in the early twentieth century remark on the absence of and pressing need for Western medical care. Indeed, Stewart (1911), following a 1906 journey down the Mackenzie and up the Yukon assessing resources and general conditions for the government, makes a plea for a hospital to be located at Ft. Simpson or on Great Slave Lake. He notes that in his entire two-thousand-mile journey between Edmonton and the Arctic Ocean the only doctors available were at Athabasca Landing and Peace River. Beyond,

> the only medical aid available is from the occasional visit of the Government physician and what the missionaries are able to furnish. At practically every fort and Indian village on our way we were besieged for medicine by the afflicted. In many cases they were the victims of chronic diseases which would undoubtedly yield to surgical treatment provided proper means were afforded for attendance and nursing. (p. 267-277)

That same year naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton (1911) notes Chief Squirrel's comments:

> You see how unhappy we are, how miserable and sick. When I made this treaty with your government, I stipulated that we should have here a policeman and a doctor; instead of that you have sent nothing but missionaries. (p. 94)

Apparently Squirrel thought Seton could be of some use medically for he brought Seton around to several people to try to help with the medicines brought with him. Seton attempts various cures of diseases he describes of being of the "white man's importation" (p. 94).

Twenty years later, Vyvyan (1998) mentions the challenges facing Doctor McDonald, as the only doctor in the region, but also comments on the signs of his being or having been a drinker. For the most part medical care was left to the Grey Nuns, and Ft. Smith, with its hospital, was considered well off. Likely due to the need for publicity for their work given the very low rate of remuneration by the federal government most visitors to the community were taken on a tour of the hospital (Waldo, 1923; Vyvyan, 1998) Waldo (1923) mentions seeing three old women in the ward, who he suggests, if not for the Sisters, would have been left by their families to abandonment in the snow rather than the "earthly paradise" (p. 96) the sisters provide for them. After Dr. McDonald left it was hit and misses as to whether there was a doctor in the community. Elsie Yanik (Laroque) (1993) tells about her mother's illness in the mid 1920s. In December, with no adequate care available locally, she traveled via the Ryan Brothers horse-drawn flat sleighs, taking ten days to get as far as Ft. McMurray and from there by train to Edmonton (Yanik, 1993). She died in the hospital in Edmonton in January and by the next fall the younger children, Elsie included, were placed in the convent in Ft. Resolution. American doctors accompanying their troops during WWII provided some care to local people. However, when Elsie's brother brought his wife in from Great Slave Lake by boat for TB treatment the army doctor had already left with the troops for further north and no real treatment was available. His wife soon returned home to the Rocher River settlement to die.

Prior to 1911, the annual visit to pay treaty ($5/person) was the only time official Ottawa was present. Agent Conroy, traveling through the region in 1909, reported in his summary to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs having made these comments at Ft. Fitzgerald regarding the growing concern with TB (DIA, 1909).

> I advised them to continue living in teepees as these are more healthy than shacks, which have not any open fireplaces or any means of ventilation, but are

> heated with sheet iron stoves, which in my opinion are very unhealthy for them. I believe that most of the tubercular troubles amongst these people could be traced to these dirty unhealthy places. If built with open fireplaces, the foul air would be carried off. I suggested burning down these shacks, as the department would provide them with teepees. One old man informed me that he was going to build a good shack similar to that of the white man. I drew his attention to the fact that the white man kept his shack clean. He did not see why the Indians could not do the same if the government would provide them with the soap to do so.

Government reports continue to reiterate this theme, taking a victim-blaming stance while failing to provide treatment. The DIA annual report for 1911 suggests that:

> the use of a text-book on hygiene, in which special chapters on tuberculosis are incorporated . . . in the schools, will familiarize the Indian children with the nature of the disease and the steps that should be taken to prevent contagion, a nd most beneficial results can confidently be expected from the knowledge thus imparted.

Tuberculosis was considered caused both by poor cleanliness habits and a genetic susceptibility, similarly to smallpox. As a long-run solution, the mixing of more resistant white blood with the Indian population was suggested by one of Canada's foremost TB experts, Dr. Ferguson. The belief was that not only cultural assimilation but biological assimilation was needed to improve Indian health (Lux, 2001). In contrast, Kelm (1998) argues that Aboriginal people are not, as stereotyped in these accounts, pathetic, pathological, and hopeless. Rather, they have been subjected to a colonial experience consciously applied to Aboriginal peoples through government-sponsored health social, educational, and legal strategies. Expenditure for hospital treatment of Indian patients was resisted by Ottawa decade after decade, often using the explanation that Indians dislike the restraint necessary for hospital treatment (DIA, 1911; Lux, 2001).

In 1937, the Department of Indian Affairs cut any expenditures for chronic treatment of Treaty Indians, including TB, and indicated it would fund treatment for acute illness only (Fumoleau, 1974; McCormack, 1984). During the entire period of

1912-1946 the rate of reimbursement for patients at the Mission hospital in Ft. Smith remained at $1 per day for the first one thousand patient days and at $.65 for following patient days. As in the case of schooling, the funds at this time were for treaty Indians only and no funds were available for non-status Indians or Métis (McCormack, 1984). Finally, in 1946, not only was the rate for patients in Ft. Smith raised to $2.50 per day but the Charles Camsell Hospital was opened to treat Indian TB patients from northern Alberta and further north. Many patients from Ft. Smith were now (the 1950s and 1960s) sent south to the Camsell for from six months to several years at a time. While most likely better medical care was received the patients lengthy hospital stays resulted in another set of social problems, as the absence of family members proved highly disruptive to family and marital stability (Gibson, 1988). As late as 1967 one of Frank Laviolette's daughters was sent to Edmonton for treatment for over a year.

When Dr. Otto Schaefer arrived in Yellowknife in 1952 as Chief Medical Health Officer, he describes TB as occurring at epidemic proportions. At that time eighty-five percent of the medical workload and bed space involved TB (Gibson, 1988). By the late 1960s, when TB rates were greatly reduced (although rates of exposure continue to be high), the after affects of the increasing alcohol abuse were now seen as epidemic-like in nature (Gibson, 1988). More recently increased adiposity is noted along with higher rates of diabetes and cancers (Ruttan, 1998).

The nature of an imposed and highly bureaucratic health care system along with the expectation by health care workers and administrators that decisions would be in their hands rather than those of the patient or community were later seen to contribute to dependency and inequality resulting in a further cycle of health consequences (Gibson, 1988; Roberts, 1988; Sarsfield, 1988). All the six interview participants in this study were greatly affected by TB, either personally, like Louis and Mary, through the loss of parents, like Frank and Maryanne, and for all through the deaths or illnesses of siblings and children.

Most of the interview participants had family members who knew bush medicines, as in the case of Eleanor Jeremie and Alexis and Victoria Beaulieu. Most of the participants knew and used some bush medicines themselves, although they did not consider themselves particularly proficient in this area. As Alexis Beaulieu's brother, Francois King Beaulieu (Arthur's uncle, Louis' great-uncle), recalled in 1987,

> I used to make Indian Medicine, I know a lot about it, but I don't bother with it anymore because there are lots of good doctors now. My brother Alexis Beaulieu taught me about Indian medicine; what to do and how to do it. He and his wife (Victoria) were good doctors for Indian Medicine. People would send for them because the people knew they were really good. Alexis used to travel around to heal the people. He even cured mentally ill people. (Beaulieu, 1987, p.68)

Pierre Squirrel was also known to cure mental illness with plant medicines. The first Western medicines available were aspirin, liquid pain killer, and Sullivan's liniment; they were referred to as of very limited value, especially as compared to the traditional knowledge available. Like Francois above, these Elders have come to rely on Western medical care; however, often speaking of them with a degree of skepticism or regret for what was lost.

Having a hospital in the community became a matter of pride to many community members and many women worked in the mission hospital's kitchen, laundry, and as attendants over the years. The memory of being a medical center with a hospital before other communities haunts current discussion in regards to health planning. Maintaining a hospital (non-surgical) given budget cuts is a challenge to the community health board but any move to downsize the facility to a medical centre has been strongly resisted. Frequent administration and staff changes, difficulty recruiting doctors and nurses, the sometimes unexamined attitudes of southern health care professionals, and a bureaucratic approach all continue to challenge health care delivery systems in the community (Ruttan, 1998).

Direct Supervision: Assuming Control

The first permanent representatives of Canadian government were located in Ft. Smith in 1911, although police had been located in Ft. Fitzgerald a few years earlier. In the language of the Department of Indian Affairs, Ft. Smith located in "this far away portion of the Dominion" was now under "direct supervision" (DIA, 1911). Prior to this date the annual treaty party, led by Inspector Conroy, traveled to the area to pay Treaty and hold a meeting where issues of concern could be brought up (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). The department's justification for locating an Indian agent in Ft. Smith was that until recently the people had been dependent on the fur trade and "any needed relief to prevent suffering has been issued in past years by the Hudson's Bay Company" (DIA, 1911) and an agent not necessary. However, with the presence of other trading companies, and increased demands by the HBC that the government take up what had technically been their responsibility since 1867 (Fumoleau, 1974/2004), it was now "deemed advisable to appoint local representatives of the department who could deal at first hand with the question of relief, which at any time might become a pressing one owing to the failure of the natural food-supply" (DIA, 1911).

The new Indian agent was provided with farming implements, "dressed lumber," a shingle mill, and a millwright to construct farm buildings. He was expected to serve as a role model by experimenting with what crops would grow in the region, something that the Catholic mission and several Métis families had ascertained earlier. Each agent was also "clothed with the full authority of a magistrate, coroner and mining recorder" (DIA, 1911) with the last task being most significant given the expected increase in mining claims and the need to regulate access and fees. After 1939 and the retirement of long-term agent Gerald Card, the regional position of Indian agent was moved to Ft. Chipewyan (McCormack, 1984). The NWT's RCMP, with its large contingent of up to 20 members, was now headquartered in Ft. Smith rather than Ft. Fitzgerald; they took over some of these functions and the Indian Agent visited the community occasionally.

The Department of Indian Affairs also believed they had a duty to lift the moral character of Indian people and thus supported efforts aimed at advancing Western education and religion, seen to be the twin sisters of this effort. Once again this primarily consisted of moral support of the efforts of the missions who carried out this work, rather than any substantial financial support (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). In addition they were concerned that,

> the great bar to moral progress from our point of view is the craving for intoxicants, which brings many other evils in its train and a certain license in the relation of the sexes which varies in objectionable features in different sections of the country. (DIA, 1911)

A negative influence was attributed to the influence of lower-class white men coming in to the region who, with what was described as their own low morality, were thought to exacerbate these problems (DIA, 1913). Local people generally indicate these same men were easier to deal with as they mixed in and sometimes intermarried with them. Therefore the police were seen as as essential, if not more so, to the "civilization" of northern Aboriginal communities as the Indian agent.

Vyvyan (1998), in her travel account, remarks favourably on these men of the Mounted Police "There is however, one magnificent type of manhood that stands out in the North … There they guard … the white man's justice and the white man's creed" (p. 67). Jean Godsell (1959) also finds the "police boys" appealing, young men who did their duty in all kinds of conditions and "made our house their home" (p. 162) adding to the tension she experienced with other community women. Canadian historian Morris Zaslow (1971) seems to have succumbed to the meta-narrative of Mounties as the heroes of an orderly Canadian frontier. He describes their role, as one that only the RNWMP, and after 1920 the RCMP could do so well, as one of "introducing elements of order, authority, and stability to a remote frontier land suddenly made to undergo a difficult process of cultural change" (p. 248). In this vein, Kitto in his 1930 survey report notes the efficiency of this group of "picked men" from "this famous Canadian force" in "maintaining a firm grip on the situation" in the north (p. 31). He cites their famous long winter patrols by dog team as a way, not only of keeping an eye on things, but of ensuring that "the natives are made to feel the government has an interest in their welfare" (p. 32). Interestingly, Fred Dawson described the patrols differently when interviewed in 1993:

> In the past, police always traveled everywhere . . . After Christmas, they would travel among the people, probably watching you, looking at you, just watch the people, eh. (Dolan, 1993)

Despite visions of northern exploits, the primary role of the police was to fight illegal liquor traffic and to ensure the enforcement of game regulations (especially after the passing of the Northwest Game Act of 1917). These were both activities that caused a great deal of local resentment. The lengthening list of game regulations were directly at odds with local understanding of the conditions of Treaty 8 where no interference with hunting rights and practices had been promised for "as long as the sun shines and the river flows." In 1913, Chief Alexandre Laviolette of Ft. Chipewyan, who had signed the Treaty himself, was convicted of hunting beaver out of season making the picture very clear (Abel, 1993). Other police duties included enforcement of new regulations aimed at preventing forest fires, (forest fires were sometimes set along the river in order to produce good moose habitat), checking on fur regulations, and later enforcement of hospital isolation or removal south for TB treatment if required. The police response to the destructive and unlawful practices of the increasing number of white trappers following WWI was appreciated (Abel, 1993). Still, as Abel (1993) points out, the primary allegiance of the police was to Canada and Canada's interests as defined by the federal bureaucracy and legislation. That they did provide assistance to Aboriginal people, including the dispensing of relief monies if no Indian Agent was present, was secondary (Abel, 1993).

Given that it was against the law for Indians with Treaty status to drink alcohol, over the years much police effort was put into patrolling the streets, picking up and jailing people who were intoxicated, and trying to catch bootleggers. The RCMP were also involved in giving out beaver quota seals and checking for abuses of this system, as referred to in Mary Heron's story about her old aunt. Individual policemen were liked by the community based on their personality and their willingness to interact with community members including attending dances and other social activities. Others were seen as pursuing their duties in a vindictive manner based in prejudice. At one Christmas season dance, Eliza Schaeffer (Tourangeau, Laviolette) remembers a policeman "jumped into the room" (Dolan, 1993) and took all the handkerchiefs given by the men to the women to dance with (they held hands with a handkerchief after which the women could keep the handkerchiefs). This was likely in response to the clause in the Indian Act that disallowed give-aways, potlatches, and other ceremonies (participants were subject to from two to six month jail terms). As Eliza said "They thought they had authority over everyone. Because of that they were discussed. All the people went to them to talk to them [the police]. After that that [interference] stopped" (Dolan, 1993). Instances as basic as the following stuck in people's minds:

> I remember when I was a kid, about 12, my uncle asked me to go buy some cigarettes for him. When I got home a policeman came up to me asking me about a robbery. When I told him I didn't know anything about it he shook me hard and yelled at me. He was doing it again when my uncle came up and told him I had been to the store for him. Apparently the guy that did it had told him he had seen me going by. I've never liked police much from then on. (R. Beaver, 2002)

Two cases of more than ordinary injustice were mentioned by several of the participants: the first was the hanging in Ft. Smith of Albert Lebeau, a Slavey Dene from Ft. Providence; the second was the eviction of Magloire Beaver from Wood Buffalo National Park. In both cases local people felt the consequences were held to be much stronger than warranted. In the case of Albert Lebeau (1921), the federal government had decided it was high time to set an example of civilized justice in the north, in light of two earlier murders in the Northwest Territories which from their perspective had been dealt with too leniently. Fathers Rouvière and Le Roux were murdered in the Coppermine region in 1913 by Sinnisiak and Uluksuk after incidents of pushing, shoving, and attempted intimidation by Le Roux while traveling together in the winter. They were tried in Edmonton and Calgary in 1917. Their death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and they were let go in Ft. Resolution in 1919. In this case coming just a few years later, Lebeau had indeed murdered his wife and infant which he eventually admitted in his trial. However, extenuating circumstances involving Albert's apparent "simple mindedness" and the fact that his wife had told him that the baby was fathered by a white man, likely a priest, led to calls for leniency even within the white community (Green, 2004; P. Godsell, 1939; Mercredi, 1977). An elaborate trial was held in Ft. Providence with Mounties in their scarlet, lawyers in their robes, the judge in his wig and twelve white jurors brought down from Ft. Smith along with the court party (P. Godsell, 1939). Judge Dubac, in pronouncing sentence, is said to have broken down and cried as did the police constables following the eventual hanging in Ft. Smith (P.Godsell, 1939). Louis Mercredi, a Special Constable, involved in the case quit immediately after the hanging, having lost any taste for police work.

They say Lebeau was not aware he was going to hang until the measurements for the coffin were taken the night before. Frank Laviolette reports his foster father, Billy Lyall, a witness, as saying that Lebeau was dragged, calling out for help the whole way, to the new execution stage built for the occasion. A hangman brought in from Saskatchewan was waiting for him on the platform. Just before climbing on to the first step, Albert apparently called out for help from the Blessed Virgin. Lyall indicated that Albert was dead instantly but he was nevertheless dragged up the stairs and hung, already a dead man. Blood was said to drip out of his coffin all the way to the graveyard, an unexplainable phenomenon. This case rather than impressing people with the "white man's law," is still discussed as a case of injustice; the strangeness of the final events indicating that this was so. The area where the scaffold was left standing for well over a decade, another aspect of the lesson, was said to be haunted. Even in my time, people pointed out the two trees where the scaffold had been and also the location of the last of the three Ft. Smith hangings in 1957, one of the last in Canada. Some people say that the negative impact of these three hangings still affects Ft. Smith.

Game and Parks

After twenty years of increasing reports of low buffalo numbers by visitors to Ft. Smith a ban on hunting bison was put in place in 1894. These low figures were supplemented by figures obtained by fur traders many of whom, based on oral testimony, were also engaged in the trade for pemmican and bison robes even after the 1894 ban. Population estimates were highly variable. For example, Cornwallis King, an experienced trader, estimated approximately five hundred on the Salt Plains, not far from Ft. Smith, in 1888 (Weekes, 1949) while six years later, Caspar Whitney (1896), a big game hunter, put this herd at one hundred and fifty. By 1898, Inspector Jarvis, sent out by the Canadian government on a reconnaissance mission, came up with an estimate of three hundred for the entire wood bison population.

According to local oral accounts, Chief Squirrel seems to have felt that while numbers were decreased from earlier years they certainly weren't as low as these estimates indicate. His stories express his frustration with people from outside who came to investigate, took a trip or two out to the prairies, and then made judgments while local people knew there were many more places buffalo could be found. Squirrel attributed the bison decline to snow conditions that left grazing areas inaccessible, large scale drowning, an earlier outbreak of anthrax, and increased wolf predation. Earlier post hunting and pemmican production for brigade provisioning (see Appendix D) was likely a significant factor (Ferguson, 1993; Ferguson & Laviolette, 1992). Nevertheless, given the political and emotional reaction to the bison destruction on the Great Plains of Canada and the United States, including articles in the Globe and Mail about the issue, the dye was cast (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000; McCormack, 1984). By 1924, following his 1920 recommendation to set aside the land for a permanent bison reserve, Frank Kitto (1924) (Engineer to the Natural Resources Intelligence Division) estimates a population increase of probably 2000 and declares that "In short, Canada has saved the bison . . . [now in a prime northern environment]- more majestic than ever" (p. 437). Later, along this line, public opinion about the shooting of excess bison in Wainright Buffalo Park would be a factor in the move of these animals to what is now Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) despite biologists concerns regarding maintaining the integrity of plains and wood bison species.

In 1897, the Indian Commissioner for the Athabasca Region, Macrae, met with local people coming off the spring hunt. After first getting information from them on numbers seen and numbers taken that winter he went on to charge and punish the hunters involved in an effort to set an example (Preble, 1908). While noting an increase in the herd, Macrae recommended continued "vigorous protective measures in order to perpetuate the herd" (Preble, 1908, p.148). Traveling earlier in 1897, on a government commission, RNWMP Inspector Jarvis met with a party of hunters in the bush (Susie King Beaulieu) near Ft. Smith who indicted they were unaware of the ban. In response he gave them a warning (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000). He also met sports hunter Hanbury (1904), out buffalo hunting with the HBC manager, fully aware of the ban and, having come all the way from England, impervious to the possibility of a $200 fine (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000). Inconsistencies of enforcement in regards to white sports hunters were said to particularly infuriate Squirrel and other Fitzgerald and Salt River hunters. Occasional permits were given to sport hunters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000) and later, in 1916, the shooting of several specimens for the Smithsonian Institute, during a period when meat was scarce, raised this issue again.

Given these circumstances, Pierre Squirrel and other local headmen, including, William Kiskorray, Michel Mandeville, and Johnny Paulette, were ready to address the issue of hunting rights when the Treaty 8 party arrived in 1899. Notable is the perception by several in attendance including the commissioners, that the treaty would surely not have been signed if any restriction of the right to hunt, trap, fish, or to travel at will in pursuit of such activities had been anticipated (Daniel, 1999; Fumoleau, 1974/2004). Antoine Beaulieu, sixteen at the time of the treaty, testifying at the Paulette Case hearings in 1973, verified this view. After first clarifying that he couldn't be exact as he couldn't read (the Treaty) and he couldn't understand English, Antoine went on to say: "What I understood then was that they won't stop us from killing anything and there won't be no law against anything, game and so on, living sources"(Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, 1973, p 313). He indicated they were urged to take the Treaty payment and were told that if they did they would "never be in trouble or hard up or anything" (Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, 1973, p. 317). Beaulieu indicated there had been no intention to give up land and that nothing had been said in the discussions about doing so. They were simply told that if they signed the Treaty and took the money they would never want for anything. In response to the Court's question, Beaulieu went on to acknowledge their awareness by 1899 of a temporary ban on hunting bison: that they were not to kill buffalo and that there would be consequences from the government if they did.

> They didn't tell us how long we were not to kill them and it was a fearful thing to us at that time. We were afraid to kill them. It was just as if we were scared

> to kill buffalo at that time but they never told us how long not to kill them. (Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, 1977, p. 314)

According to Antoine, at that time everyone hunted anywhere they wanted including in what later became Wood Buffalo National Park. In Ft. Smith, with the issue of bison hunting very much on the minds of the population, Commissioner McKenna notes being uneasy, as he knew that Parliament was going to continue the "temporary" imposition of hunting restrictions on bison (Daniel, 1999).

> But at neither point could we take the responsibility of telling the Indians that the prohibition was to be extended. The chief difficulty in dealing with the Indians in this country arose from the fact that they believed that the making of a treaty would lead to interference with their hunting upon which they must depend for a living. When we were asked about the Wood Buffalo prohibition we had to say that we had no instructions as to any change in the law. Our mission would likely have been a failure if we had opened up the question. (p. 89)

Six months following the signing of Treaty 8, further restrictions on buffalo hunting were announced beginning a practice of ever increasing hunting restriction, experienced as an unending cycle of violation of treaty promises (Daniel, 1999; Fumoleau, 1974; Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, 1973). This pattern of increased game restriction, greater emphasis by government on the welfare of animals rather than on the people, and the establishment of WBNP were all criticized repeatedly by local people and by the Oblate Bishops (Fumoleau, 1974; McCormack, 1984). Further, while lands were set aside for Wood Buffalo National Park, despite treaty promises reserve lands were not fully allocated until just recently despite Chief Squirrel and others' efforts to do so since 1916.

In the early twentieth century, regulations on beaver hunting in Alberta, on the hunting of migratory birds, and the establishment of WBNP made things worse. These regulations were motivated by Western concepts of conservation and of government's role in the regulation of wildlife use. The attitude of Bell, the first Indian agent (1911-1915), didn't help. Bell reported to his superiors, that in bad years, when meat was scarce, extra effort would be taken to protect the bison (from the people)

(McCormack, 1984). However, the next Indian agent, Gerald Card (1915-1932), who was to spend seventeen years in the position, aggravated park and game officials. He repeatedly told Treaty Indians that they could kill buffalo or other game out of season if they were starving (McCormack, 1984). Card may have held this belief given the treaty implications, or his view may have represented the fact that any relief would come out of his meager budget. Costs were also a factor in granting hunting exceptions to Western institutions in later years. Permits were granted for the Oblates to kill buffalo (1929-1949) rather than increasing the per diem for hospitals and schools. Later in the 1950s, representing another change of philosophy, commercial hunts were organized by park officials to subsidize park costs while native hunting was still restricted (Sandlos, 2002). While local men were hired for these commercial slaughters the meat went elsewhere.

It was clear, early on, that the government was operating on the assumption that the signing of Treaty 8 meant the Cree and Chipewyan people of the region had given up their land (Daniel, 1999; McCormack, 1984; Supreme Court, 1977). When establishing the park, a clause referring to the ability of the government to take up land for mining and other purposes was referenced any time the question was brought up (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000; McCormack, 1984). However, for the most part, Park administrators had only the vaguest understanding of the treaty as relevant at all. They had little understanding of what the treaty meant to the men, including Chief Squirrel, who had signed the treaty. This question was addressed in the Paulette case (1973) which ruled that indeed the people had not been under any understanding that they were giving up their land when the treaty was signed (Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, 1977). This decision ushered in a land claims process, including selection of some lands in WBNP, which was only settled in the last few years. However, issues related to the understanding of under what conditions the government may "take up lands" under Treaty 8 remains contested as witnessed by the Mikisew Cree (Ft. Chipewyan) case (Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Sheila Copps, et al) against Parks Canada for failure to consult which is currently under decision by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Thus the traditional economy was restricted by government hunting and game regulations; eventually, reliance on assistance increased as a consequence. The trapping environment also took a hard hit following World War I. Increasing numbers of white trappers arrived in the area in response to high fur prices (post war), and the lack of employment opportunities elsewhere (Jarvenpa, 1977; McCormack, 1984). Jarvenpa indicates there were thousands of these single white men in the subarctic of Canada and Alaska in the 1930s (Jarvenpa, 1977). These trappers, often of European or American origin (for example see Appendix D), were not invested in the future of the country but in making a stake as quickly as possible (Fumoleau, 1974; McCormack, 1984). Breaking open lodges and killing every animal, using poison bait, and using aircraft were all practices to, as administrator O. S. Finnie referred to it, "mine" an area quickly. This response contrasts with Indian Agent Bury's description of the Native approach as one of leaving some animals for recolonization (McCormack, 1984). Thus at the same time that shooting game — including buffalo, migratory birds, beaver, and later caribou — was being restricted, people were increasingly hungry, and disease was prevalent (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). Further, while prices were high, white trappers were undermining the long-term ecological viability of the region which left many Aboriginal trappers with no other choice but to compete by going ahead and taking as much fur as they could as well (McCormack, 1984).

With the establishment of the Wood Buffalo National Park, most Treaty Indians were allowed to continue to hunt and trap (except for bison) in the park while Ft. Smith Métis were not allowed to hunt in this area (the northern half of the park), despite the recommendations of government administrator Finnie against this move (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000; McCormack, 1984). The Indian agent at the time, however, thought disallowing Métis hunting was a good thing; it would encourage the "half breeds to work cutting wood instead of living the life of an Indian" (McCormack, 1984, p 131). These dynamics brought home the nebulous legal position of Métis at the time and created the beginnings of division in what had for many been a similar way of life. As the Elders interviewed for this project stressed, "We were one people then." Additionally, WBNP officials envisioned a "park" under their control with boundaries meant to conserve animals in a "natural" state while local people saw the land as a network of trails, experiences, and life ways. Park Superintendent Graham held that allowing Indians to hunt in the park was a great concession and that allowing "half-breeds" to continue to hunt in the park too would undermine it's integrity as a National Park (McCormack, 1984). A strong sentiment to disallow all hunting and make WBNP a true reserve for animals, a wilderness, was held by many of the park's enforcement agents and bureaucracy (McCormack, 1984; Sandlos, 2002). In the '40s biologist Soper indicates that the park can never exhibit "the normal balance of nature" due to predation by humans (Church, 1976). Efforts continued over the years to find ways to reduce the number of hunters and trappers allowed in the park resulted in ongoing tension, resistance, and recently increased pressure by the Métis community (Church, 1976; Ferguson, 1993; Ferguson & Laviolette, 1992). This served to frame WBNP from within Western visions of what was "lost" in most of North America, negating local views of appropriate interaction with and uses of land and animals, and how they should be "preserved" though measurement, regulation, and management of wildlife.

Kitto cites the hostile views of Ft. Chipewyan RCMP Inspector Anderson (1920), who described Indians as "exceedingly lazy, thriftless, dirty, untruthful, and immoral" and Métis as "liars and thieves" (Kitto in McCormack, 1984, p. 122). Anderson called for the creation of a true wildlife reserve, leaving a small reserve for Indians at the mouth of the Salt River where they could get fish (McCormack, 1984). Later government administrator O.C. Finnie was to propose to Minister of Indian Affairs, Duncan Scott, that sending all the Indians to a large reserve, possibly north of Great Slave Lake, would remove the problem (Fumoleau, 1974/2004; McCormack, 1984). By 1925, just three years in, Superintendent Graham also suggests removing all Indians from the park and putting them on subsidy instead. At the same time, charges for any infringement of hunting regulations were pursued aggressively and included a system of wardens, patrols, and warden cabins throughout the park (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). Biologist Harper (1932) writing in the *Journal of Mammology* holds that the buffalo wardens are "vitally necessary to guard the buffalo herds from these irresponsible natives' (p. 34) continuing stereotyped perceptions as does geologist J.M

Bell (1929) who describes local people as leading "diseased…drab, sordid, and singularly gloomy" lives (p. 564).

Regulations regarding the trapping of beaver were also contested in response to increasingly restrictive beaver quotas. During the late 1930s, when conditions favored Native trappers over white trappers — for example when closed seasons for beaver were deemed necessary due to low population estimates (deemed related to the dynamics introduced by the white trapper phenomena) — white trappers vigorously resisted regulations that allowed Indian trapper's fifteen beaver seals each (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). At the same time, Bishop Breynat complained vigorously that the police were using overly narrow definitions of Indian identity and were unduly restrictive in defining eligibility for beaver permits (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). White trappers insisted on principles of equality as Canadians which played well to the politics of the Alberta government and that of the NWT Commissioner Cory who often suggested giving out rations to the "natives" as an answer rather than interfering with the rights of white trappers (Fumoleau, 1974, Wetherell & Kmet, 2000). As Commissioner Cory put it "they weren't about to set aside an area one third the size of Canada just for natives" (Fumoleau, 2004, p. 383). At a meeting in Ft. Smith, called by white trader and trapper Frank Conibear to organize white protest, Chief "Abram" (Abraham Deneyutchele) called his bluff. Abram pointed out that while most Indian trappers had around 60 traps in total, Conibear, with the resources to employ a man to assist him, not only set 600 traps but also pushed Native trappers out of their own trapping areas (Fumoleau, 1974).

In 1938, given these tensions, Magloire Beaver was arrested for using illegal trapping methods in WBNP, put in jail, and tried. He was fined, prevented from retrieving all of his equipment, and excluded from trapping in the park for a period of two years. Willie Waquan, trapping with him, ended up with a longer jail time, as a result of the classic prisoners' dilemma. Not knowing that Magloire had readily admitted that the set snare the park wardens had found was his, Waquan had steadfastly denied that Magloire used snares, not wanting to betray him, and ended up in jail for several months. Magloire never went back to the park, but instead he found a place to the east, in the Northwest Territories, with a good fish supply for dogs where he wouldn't have to deal with so many regulations and aggressive wardens. When I asked Louis how his dad felt about what happened he told me:

> He was quite angry; it wasn't fair, all ways. He was using those snares, but other people were doing wrong. He didn't say anything. He caught them breaking lodges, he didn't say nothing . . . He steps out there, works hard, builds up, got a load of fur.

By this he meant that while his father was breaking the regulation that required the use of traps rather than snares for fox, he was not doing anything that would really hurt the environment, like breaking open beaver lodges. And that what he had, he got by hard work and by trapping in a good way, rather than by using ecologically destructive methods like that. He'd traveled out further towards the Caribou Mountains than the rest and stayed out in the bush all the time rather than returning to town a lot. From Magloire's perspective the restriction on snares didn't make sense — there was a quota on fox anyway — and snares were more effective than steel traps. Besides traps cost money while snares could be made from scrap pieces of wire found around the community. Traps had to be bought on credit from the white trader and as a result reduced the income you would end up with. Besides, traps were heavy and awkward to carry; with snares you could just carry a bunch of them in your back pocket.

Frank Laviolette also brought up this case — he pointed out that many people believed that the authorities had set Magloire up because he was such a successful hunter and trapper — that they wanted an excuse to get him out of the park. Magloire was allowed one trip back to his cabin. It was a big cabin he'd built for his family with a twelve-foot over-hanging roof where he could store his equipment, including the over two hundred wooden stretchers he'd made. Two wardens accompanied him to his trapline and Magloire was allowed to take one sled load of his things. As Frank says, Magloire never did as well after that; he never found as productive a trapping area although he continued to work hard all his life. Frank quotes Bill Schaeffer, a former buffalo warden, as saying the park could have charged Magloire a $10, 000 fine and he could have made it up in that place.

One of the adaptive aspects of the traditional hunting and trapping cycle was the freedom to move to wherever was most suitable at the time and the autonomy to make those choices given environmental conditions and social relationships. The effect of the increasingly regulated game seasons and trapping locations was decreased mobility in ways that undermined success. The boundaries set between Alberta, the Northwest Territories, and Wood Buffalo National Park, each with its own set of hunting and trapping regulations, compounded the matter. Registered traplines discouraged traditional reliance on the hunting and trapping commons and encouraged a focus on individual ownership of areas. This resulted in increasing conflict over access with neighboring traplines whose location was now dictated by government mapping rather than by kinship and tradition (Wetherall & Kmet, 2000). Even in WBNP where group trapping areas were established this still meant that other people, often Métis relatives, were now excluded and travel to areas outside the park was now restricted by the registered trapline system. Resentment towards government was only natural under these conditions of restricted autonomy and an increase in an unhappy dependence was noted. These restrictions, added to the colonial dynamic in other areas, including education, fostered gradual acceptance of dependence — a form of colonization that continues to impact social, health, and economic conditions in an intergenerational fashion today.

As Métis Elder, former trapper and RCMP special constable, Archie Laroque noted in 1993:

> I done a lot of traveling into the barrens, and all over the bush. You didn't have to worry about camps. There were camps of Indians all over the bush . . . hunting, trapping. They had to . . . they couldn't make a living in town.
>
> That was the good old days. People lived out in the bush steady, all winter. In the spring they'd come to town. Nowadays there isn't an axe mark in the bush no more … Then, the government decided kids got to go to school. Well, how could they go to school, if the only way to make a living is out in the bush, eh? That's where the family allowance came in. Kids had to go to school, or they couldn't get their family allowance. They couldn't go to school in the bush, so the women had to stay in town with the kids. The family allowance wasn't

> quite enough . . . so that's when the welfare came in. They needed more help. I saw that happening. I knew what was happening. Kids had to go to school so that changed their lives. The old man would not stay in the bush if his wife was in town. (Laroque in Maldaver, 1993, pp. 43-44)

Contributing to this dynamic was the continual undermining of trapping through lack of government support (particularly in the province of Alberta) for a). policy to protect Aboriginal hunting and trapping rights, for b). treaty rights, or for c).humanitarian considerations despite the strong objections of Indian Agents Bury and Card, Department of Indian Affairs officials, and Bishop Breynat, and later Bishop Trocellier (Fumoleau, 1974/2004; McCormack, 1984; Wetherall & Kmet, 2000). Given the dynamics that Archie Laroque refers to — separation from family, decreasing fur prices, increased trapping regulation, more competitive trapping conditions — an increasing dependence on living in town, working for wages in the summer and living on assistance in the winter was set in place. Government pressure on Aboriginal caribou hunters in the nineteen fifties, who were perceived as over-hunting, misusing, and wasting caribou resulting in an extreme population decline was considereded patently untrue and caused increasing resentment (Usher, 2004). The continual whittling away of Native systems of hunting and trapping through policy, regulation, legislation, and the use of police and wardens as agents of control along with attempts to replace Aboriginal technological traditions (held in the mind) with equipment which must be purchased all took a toll. Resentment by local people increased as continuing examples of minimal and often faulty knowledge along with disrespectful treatment of animals by biologists (herding, corralling, inoculating, and radio collaring) and government staff were witnessed (Usher, 2004). At the same time, traditional culturally endowed concepts of learning from knowledgeable Elders and the proper relationship of animal-human relationship mediated through the use of Aboriginal institutions and technology were belittled and institutions put in place to replace them with Euro-Canadian systems of education and regulation. Given the contrasts of money and staff resources spent on bison preservation, and later for the whooping crane and caribou, as compared to the well being of the people, it was obvious to Aboriginal trappers that the "game" was set against them. Also influencing this perception was the ongoing failure of non-Aboriginal managers and biologists to "listen" and learn from those who knew despite repeated attempts to share knowledge.

Following the integration of Plains bison in an attempt to "save the bison", the wood bison population quickly interbred resulting in, for the most part, a so-called hybrid species. This redefinition led to additional effort and money to now "save the last pure Wood Bison," resulting in study after study to determine how to treat, isolate, and later perhaps kill off the now diseased bison herds (Carbyn, 2003; Sandlos, 2002). The issue of science knowledge versus traditional ecological knowledge has a long and very contentious history in WBNP. I have chosen in this discussion not to concentrate on that story, it is itself huge and beyond the scope of the illustrative purposes of this chapter. Nevertheless, it is typified by debates regarding the nature of empirical knowledge and scientific proof versus accumulated experience.

An example is provided by the following comment in reaction to Frank Laviolette's testimony (federal environmental review hearing reviewing the status of the Bison) regarding Chief Squirrel's statement that there had been a die off due to anthrax in the nineteenth century. Due to the initial failure by biologists to recognize the disease as anthrax during an outbreak in the early 1960s biologists' were defensive about their response. While referring to Frank as well intentioned, the biologist involved, in a letter asking the review panel to take Frank's testimony with a grain of salt, refers to Pierre Squirrel's oral history of previous outbreaks of anthrax as a "story" and Frank's comments on mismanagement and resulting bison suffering and deaths as simply "rumour and innuendo" (Novakowski, 1990, p. 7).

> Such past observations could be embellished over time. Nevertheless, the narrators [P. Squirrel, G.Tourangeau] were credible and there may be something to it. To my knowledge and that of Dr. Choquette, no investigation to prove or disprove the statement of Mr. Laviolette and others has ever been carried out (Novakowski, 1990, p.8)

This brief illustration, while acknowledging that Squirrel may have been a credible individual, is a good example of the assumed need for scientific investigation and proof, expertise in the written knowledge of experts, and disrespect for Aboriginal oral traditions of knowledge transmission. It reflects the perceptions and experience of the biologist looking back at his career and of Western scientific training at the time. It also reflects the difference in their perceived power and status. To Novakowski, Squirrel's testimony is still just a story, second hand knowledge that may be exaggerated. However, for Frank it is oral history from a highly respected Elder whose knowledge and power are verification in themselves. He sees scientists as proceeding on guesswork and as unable to learn from others experience leading to mistakes that not only are unnecessary but that hurt animals. Thinking from a management perspective biologists often hold that if left unchecked, "Indians will destroy the resource" while from the perspective of local resource users — "biologists know little about the animals, don't respect them, and don't treat them properly."

Mechanization

Situated around the community of Ft. Smith are pieces of old machinery: a paddle wheel, an engine, and the huge, metal tie downs used for ships. Now brightly painted, they were brought out of storage and put on display by Mayor Peter Martselos (Frank Laviolette's son-in-law). These objects embody memory of the portage, of the technological improvements in portaging techniques, and of the boats themselves. They are also reminders of the river boat pilots, Berens, Bird, and many others whose skill was required in order to navigate in changing water conditions and to cross Great Slave Lake where late summer storms often resulted in huge waves.

The steamboats and later diesel boats intended for travel north to Aklavik were built locally; only the stem pieces, the metal fittings and the boilers were brought in from the south. Building the boats took all winter. Often the boats weren't quite ready when the date for the first shipping arrived as Cameron, Waldo, and others mention (Cameron, 1909; Waldo, 1923). Travelers were usually more annoyed by the HBC's disregard for their published time schedules than by the unpainted interiors (Cameron, 1909; Waldo, 1923). Frank Laviolette recalled Louis Mercredi's father, a Métis pilot, telling about the launch of the *Distributor* in 1920. Susie Kye (Joseph Abraham) and Solomon Sepp cut the ropes that held the 200 foot boat at either end, letting it slide into the river. On that trip the carpenters kept working on the interior all the way up the Mackenzie to Aklavik and back.

Many local men, often Métis, were qualified river boat pilots like the highly respected Johnny Berens. In later years, Frank Laviolette organized a commemorative trip in the mid 1970s for all the old river boat pilots still alive. Recalling how much they enjoyed the trip down the river they knew so well gave him much satisfaction. Arthur remembered the active days at the boat yard at Gravel Point and the later large motorized boats including the *Slave Lake*, a steel boat. He also mentioned the *Clearwater* that went down in a storm on Lake Athabasca in1956 while towing three barges. All the crew aboard drowned while the boat was eventually pulled out of the lake, refitted, and used again. In this context he mentioned his own ability to tow a barge with just two cables.

Speaking about the 1920s, Métis Elder Archie Laroque tells stories about the freighting companies and related work opportunities, as did Emilia Gratix.

> They hauled all the freight with horses and wagons. Ryan Brothers had about thirty-two teams of horses. There would be half in Smith unloading, and half in Fitzgerald loading, and they'd meet at "Halfway" [A rest stop with barns and accommodation]. That went on all summer. My mother used to cook for them before she died. They couldn't load them too heavy, because the roads were bad, and them iron runners were narrow; they would sink with too big a load. It'd take 'em all day to make eight miles to Halfway, then the other eight miles to Smith, all day again, but we got the freight over. Boats were running steady from Smith to Aklavik. (Laroque in Maldaver, 1993)

Americans Mickey Ryan and his brother Pat arrived in the north right after the war [WWI] and began a summer and winter freighting business that was to beat out the competition from Ft. McMurray (McKinnon, 1980; Trantner, 1946). By 1929 the mail was flown into Ft. Smith, no longer brought in by dog sled or horse team. The Ryan's began to use trucks on the portage for which they now had a franchise from the Government of Alberta (Trantner, 1946). After the new road was built during WWII boats could be taken across the portage pulled by tractor trailer. Over the years, local men who had horses or later trucks did some freighting as well. Francois King Beaulieu, one of Métis Elder Paul King's son's, recalls their horses and the work they did carrying freight:

> Once the freight arrived there [Ft. Fitzgerald] we would use horses to carry it over. There was myself, my brothers Za [Tsa] and Susie [Joseph]. We had a lot of horses. Most able people had horses to carry freight, a dollar for a hundred pounds (Dolan, 1993).

By the 1950s everything was mechanized with camps for the workers, often college students brought in from the south, located at the Northern Transportation (NT) Camp at Bell Rock. The portage was now traversed from Ft. Fitzgerald to Bell Rock, a distance of twenty-five miles, using diesel tractor trucks pulling trailers capable of carrying thirty tons (Main, 1971). In 1950 the Board of Transport held that local labour was unavailable and thus labour must be brought in (Main, 1971). This is a very questionable statement given that they only hired one Aboriginal person over the years, John Evans, Emilia Gratrix's brother-in-law. By 1961, about a hundred men were employed at Bell Rock in the summer, put up in the camp, and then flown back down south at the end of the season (MacLennan, 1961). This replacement of local men with white men once systems were established was a long standing pattern (McCormack, 1984). For example, the sons and grandsons of Métis traders Pierre Mercredi and John James Loutit in Ft. Chipewyan could not rise to the same level of employment as their fathers. These positions were taken by white men in the post WWI and Depression periods. This dynamic did not change after WWII. Jobs were often filled in government, without giving any notice to the community that a position was open, even in non-administrative positions (R. Beaver, 1/2005).

The cargoes changed as well. Furs still went "out" on the HBC boats but increasingly what went in and what went out, particularly with the Northern Transportation yard at Bell Rock, had to do with the growing mining industry. Gillham writing in 1947 about his seven years in what he refers to as the "raw north" described it as a "hell of a place" where,

> dog teams driven by illiterate natives take the mail from an airplane piloted by college graduates . . . Ladies of questionable virtue pause in the village path for a chat with the Sister from the Mission or the wife of the police inspector . . . Squaw men who can quote the classics, live in poverty and filth with their illegitimate offspring swarming around their knees. (p. xv)

Gillham (1947) describes Ft. Smith as the "capital of the north, if it had a capital" and reports seeing on the docks at Ft. Smith, "mine machinery by the ton" (p.38). He also describes Ft. Smith as "where the representatives of the Department of the Interior…rule the land" (p. 29).

The uranium used for the atomic bomb dropped over Hiroshima came from Eldorado mine, located on Great Bear Lake, in 1944. Shipped up river, the bags of uranium were often dropped as they were unloaded at the Bell Rock Landing to be portaged to Ft. Fitzgerald, leaving hot spots. In their recent land claim settlement the Salt River First Nation claimed the Bell Rock location where the old camp had stood with the proviso that they would only accept transfer from the federal government once it had been assessed for any remaining contamination and cleaned up. Since then they have declined this piece as it is indeed contaminated and there are no current plans for clean-up. Another traveler heading "down north" in 1956, Ontario poet (and lawyer) F. R. Scott had his own view of the now more mechanized but still frontier north and tried to connect canoes to cargo.

THE CAMP AT BELL ROCK

The Slave River rolled past
Downhill to the North
Running away from America
Yet bringing America with it

Up at Fort Fitzgerald
Where Mackenzie gummed his canoes
The barges moored to the dock
Were long and flat and black,
And the diesel tug was called PEACE.

I dipped my hand in water
That muddies the Beaufort Sea.
…
The cargoes speak the language of life:
Muckers for mines, acids for ores,
Barrels of gas, timber and pipe,
Bull dozers and cranes, fork-lifts and drills,
Tough hardware, and the fuels of power,
Under tarpaulins are boxes of fruit,
Tinned vegetables, baby-food and oranges,

And one big flashy fire-truck,
Like a huge red toy, red and hosy. (Scott, 1973, p. 57)

Scott (1973), like many, saw the north as empty, just waiting for cities based on northern mineral development to sprout up. Along with his traveling companion, a young Pierre Trudeau (later Prime Minister of Canada), Scott was one of many post-war travelers, eager to see a mixture of romanticized past and possible futures before it was "too late." Scott was also the mentor of Justice Thomas Berger known for his role in respecting the Aboriginal challenge to the assumptions of northern development (Berger Inquiry) (Page, 1989).

In 1961, Canadian novelist Hugh MacLennan, also struggled with the issue of modernity and frontier, contrasting the wide, gravel road from Fitz. to Bell Rock to the "viridian of endless forest dense on either side of that slow river" (p.45). He notes (1961) that the Bell Rock transportation hub was "the modern Canadian North in action" (p 42) with development of the north dependent on the diesel engine. Writing at the end of the period where Ft. Smith was the entry point into the Mackenzie District, MacLennan describes witnessing a relatively small boat, just 75 tons, being brought down the highway sideways, pulled and supported by cat tracks on two trailers with forty-eight wheels (MacLennan, 1961). What he didn't realize was that a highway would soon be built to Yellowknife finally bypassing Ft. Smith and the rapids.

Modernity and Government

As the government reviewed its' policies towards mid-century, an increasing emphasis was placed not only on controlling the moral, social, and economic behavior of Aboriginal people through government legislation but on encouraging them to embrace the spirit of progress underlying the "great modern vision" of the time. Modernity and progress were seen as inevitable: "It is up to Canada. Canada must open the gateway to the North along the Great Mackenzie. People, industry, modern life will follow" (Davies, 1947, p. 8). From this view, poet Scott (1973) wrote in the fifties: "In a land so bleak and bare, a single plume of smoke is a scroll of history" (p.70). But the potential is there as he put it: "Underground, in the coins of rock, cities sleep like seeds" (p. 55) meaning that the inevitable growth of the mining industry would lead to the sprouting of new cities. This is the same perception of north as potential and as a uniquely *Canadian* potential that excited Diefenbaker in his "roads to resources" message of the same time period (Dickerson, 1992). This vision required that northern Indian and Métis people adjust to new ways of life; education was seen to be the key to this certain and bright future. Educators of the time were sure of it:

> There is no question that in the future Canadian development will move northwards and that "those who are now training to take advantage of this future are among the most fortunate of Canadians. (Ft. Smith Federal High School, 1960, p. 14)

Robertson, the Northwest Territories Commissioner of Education, saw these students as becoming, "Miners and engineers . . . nurses, mechanics, dry cleaners and grocers, teachers and even civil servants" (p. 14). The Member of Parliament, Merv Hardie had a grander vision that included doctors, lawyers, scientists and Members of Parliament (Ft. Smith Federal High School, 1960). His message is that of the time:

> Our frontiers are being pushed back by men and women with vision, ability and a pioneering spirit . . . if development is to continue and we are to make Canada, and the North in particular a better place in which to live, you, of this year's graduating class have your part to play." (p. 15)

For the Ft. Smith educators who put together this first yearbook in 1960, the past as frontier was assumed to finally be firmly in the past and modernity and golden opportunity on the horizon. The yearbook is dedicated as follows:

> To all the undaunted giants of exploration who risked and often laid down their lives to map these vast regions of ice and snow even as far as the North Pole, to the missionaries whose zeal, self-sacrifice and devotion have raised our native population from the dark depths of pagan superstition to the brilliant light of Christianity and civilization, to all government officials, administrative personnel, educators, entrepreneurs, and various associations of men and women who now contribute to the development of the Northland, and to future generations who will build on the accomplishments of the past and present and henceforth, shape the destiny of our great Canadian North, we humbly dedicate this Yearbook. (p. 7)

Eileen Lines, a Métis woman from Ft. Smith, reviewing this year book and looking at the picture of her eager little third grade face reacts with sadness at how grandly colonial the stated visions were and how thoroughly the education provided sapped her confidence and enthusiasm. Working as a nursing assistant when she was young, it was only in her late forties that she felt confident enough to complete Bachelor's degrees in education and Native studies. Francois Paulette (2001) recalls that "When I graduated from high school in the early '70s I was the only band member to have ever graduated from high school. The average education at that time was about a grade 4-6." Raymond Beaver, however, at age 14 was already out of school and helping his father on the trapline. What was so destructive about the message was that it said, 'follow us not your parents.' Many parents now say that at the time they believed what was said, that this was the way it had to be and, as a result, did not encourage their children to learn their language but instead to concentrate on English. The now fully public school system held that instilling the attitudes and values of the white majority was required for success and used provincial curriculum to do so (Zaslow, 1984). The school system developed, however, only really suited young people who fit this model of Euro-Canadian values. The drop-out rate for Aboriginal students, many of whom found this approach irrelevant and demeaning, was and is high. At the same time today there is an Aboriginal Member of Parliament, Ethel Blondin Andrew. She and many other northern leaders were educated in Ft. Smith in the Catholic Church's Grandin College leadership program.

O. S. Finnie was the first administrator of the Northwest Territories Branch (1921-1930) which was re-located from Ottawa to Ft. Smith in 1921with a staff of 25 and many tons of office files. His son Richard was a promoter of the north in text and film during the nineteen thirties and forties. Richard was a strong advocate of modern economic development as holding the "answer for native people," echoing Stefansson's (1922) earlier call for northern development. In his book, *Canada Moves North* (1942) Finnie describes the decline of the fur trade and the march of progress as inevitable. He holds that what is needed is to create market demand in people who originally thought they needed little. This is the same dynamic remarked on by Samuel Hearne in the 1780's and by HBC Governor, George Simpson, in the 1820's, in reference to Chipewyan reliance on the plentiful caribou and their resulting independence. The challenge, Finnie (1948) says, is "how to make them like white people, saving, paying their debts and helping them keep in mind their place" (p 34). He cites the administration of the time, in contrast with his father's era, as "clinging to its policy of laissez -faire [which] has abandoned the natives to moral and physical disintegration." Finnie (1948) here was referring to very real cutbacks made in expenditures on northern peoples and northern administration following the initial investment at the time of the 1921 Norman Wells oil rush. By 1930 these funds were cut back and O. S. Finnie retired. During the thirties, funds for TB and other medical treatment were also reduced from the previous already insufficient amount (Lux, 2001; Wetherell & Kmet, 2000).

Finnie (1948) argues that Native people must accept change in their best interest. As he puts it, "if only they can become less nomadic … many of them will pursue a variety of occupations, apart from hunting and trapping, for which they are particularly suited. *They will all be better off* [italics added] (p. 37). The problem as Finnie sees it is how to move from fur trade dynamics and relationships to modern, independent wage earners, business owners, and customers. At the least he hopes for the end of the debt system used by trappers which he believes undermines modern economic development.

> The "debt" referred to is a sort of credit plan which has been in general use through out the North for a great many years. It began with the giving out of traps and a meager outfit by a trader to each hunter, and it has wound up often as a credit worth several hundred dollars; and hunters so endowed many remain beholden to a particular trader for years if either fur or ambition is lacking. Competition between traders may send debts soaring with natives wrangling credit from one post or several, then taking their fur elsewhere. It is a bad business all around, for while the unthinking or unscrupulous may rejoice temporarily in his ill-gotten wealth, eventually none of the traders will deal with him and he becomes indigent. On the other hand, if the Great Company has no competitors and is interfered with little or not at all by the

> Government, its power will make for economic enslavement among the natives.

While acknowledging there would be hardships Finnie suggests that the debt system could be discontinued though "rigid Government control, limiting traders' stocks to necessities and a modicum of luxuries, and preventing the natives from buying anything they could not pay for on the spot" (p.34). Eventually now independent Native trappers could "secure new outfits and miscellaneous supplies as well as protection [savings] against lean periods and old age" (p.34). Any moves in this direction were resisted and trapping on credit continued until the early 1980s in Ft. Smith. Even today groceries can be bought on credit at one of the local grocery stores. Local people preferred to sell their furs to traders they liked. This meant that while their main outfit might go to one of the big companies who'd outfitted them in the fall, any extra furs might go to the trader who was easiest to relate to.

Still post-WWII investment in the north grew, likely in a nationalist response to the massive effort made by the American military in northern Canada (Wetherell & Kmet, 2000; Judd, 1971). This move was also influenced by the assumption that northern development was the new economic frontier that would give Canada as a whole an economic and an image boost (Grant, 1988; Zaslow, 1967). As Davies put it in his two publications *Arctic Eldorado* (1944) and *The Great Mackenzie* (1947), there were opportunities galore for Canada in it's northern "New World" the "greatest unexploited region in the world" (1944, p. x) that Canada must respond to through investment in development of people and resources. In an attempt to make the north more ready for growth and development initiatives and to relieve the NWT Council from duties usually dealt with at the local level (Zaslow, 1967), the development of modern forms of local government as settlements, hamlets, or towns was approved by the NWT commission (Dickerson, 1992). However as this system grew in importance, the positions of mayor and town council as consistently held by white residents was experienced as disempowering by local chiefs, regardless of the Canadian enfranchisement of native peoples in 1959. As Chief Cheezie expresses below:

> It just goes to show, like the situation in Smith which has been there for a hundred years, that the situation of the native people there has deteriorated all

> within that time and in my experience there has been no respect given to the people that were living there, to the kind of things that they were concerned about; their hunting and trapping rights, the places they could live . . . I myself find it very hard to operate under the government system which doesn't give me any authority to do anything at all. They say the Ft. Smith Town Council has the power in Ft. Smith; and here I am the chief, and George [for the Métis] and myself representing 60 per cent of the population with no say over anything. (Barnaby et al, 1977, p. 128)

Zaslow (1967) suggests empowering the small local white business group as the only way towards northern political development indicating that white civil servants and labourers were usually not in the north long enough to bother and that the

> limited formal education . . . very parochial perspectives and interests, minimal experience of political institutions, and frequently a profound suspicion of the white man and all his works . . . inhibits the natives from playing the role in territorial government that their numbers warrant. (p. 177)

In contrast, Ft. Smith Métis leader, George Kurszewski, called in 1977 for greater involvement of the total community in decision making. Citing a presentation to the Northern Roads Commission by the town council, which calls for a road from Ft. McMurray and a dam on the Slave River, without any consultation with Aboriginal groups, George indicated:

> What we are saying is that when decisions of this nature or projects of this nature are proposed, it should not be a council or a system that is foreign to the people that makes the decision about whether or not projects like this should go ahead or not . . . I think this has been the history of native people, that no one should decide the future of any other person, that everyone should be involved in deciding what happens in a community, and that a few people should not decide for the rest. (Barnaby et al, 1977, pp. 125-126)

As Thomas (1966-67b) concludes in relation to Indian policy in North America "The control and administration of a people's affairs and destiny by outsiders from another culture is the prime characteristic of a colonial model" (p. 51). In Ft. Smith, the numbers of bureaucrats grew in the 1950s (Hunt, 1983). That the administration of the

Northwest Territories was still colonial at this point is beyond debate (Laing et al, 1978). Dickerson (1992) holds that during the 1950s and 60s what were presented by government as progressive policy change was in fact simply continued colonial practices and top-down administrative control. For example, the forced relocation of the remaining people living in Ft. Fitzgerald in the late 1950s resulted in devastating social and health consequences (Paulette, 2001) As Francois Paulette (2001) recalls:

> We were moved to the "Indian Village." The social conditions of the people deteriorated drastically following the move. The impact was devastating. There was a significant increase in alcoholism and death in the first two years. Before they moved to Smith my father told me that in Smith we would have lights, running water, but instead we found that nothing was available in the houses they were provided, no water, no sewers, and they had to go ahead and build their own outhouses. Also the promised jobs in town were not available except as seasonal labourers, like fire fighters. In those days the Indian agent was boss.

This forced move resulted in loss of a way of life and pride; people stopped going out on the land as much; it also led to increased use of alcohol and dependence on welfare (Paulette, 1975). As in this case, forced relocation and consolidation of Aboriginal peoples in communities based on urban settlement styles are often followed "by a breakdown in social and cultural continuity" (Waldram, 1987, p. 129) and result in tensions between family groupings (Shkilnyk, 1985; Waldram, 1987). Thus, the government's intention to implement the construction of Canadian society in the north included centralization of communities and services, increasing bureaucratic control (and numbers of employees with families) on site (Laing et al, 1977), and managing the logistics of supply and the technology required while administering restructured communities located within their own vision of north.

As the Northwest Territories Council located in Ottawa put it in 1966 their vision was as follows:

> "There are two ways in which people may dwell in the Canadian Northland. The one is to live as did the aboriginal inhabitants . . . The second way for people to dwell in the Canadian northland is to take north the trappings of

> civilization — houses, heat, stores, food, clothing, furniture, water supply, medical facilities, schools, electricity, radio communications, air transportation, motor vehicles, books, music, cameras, movies, clubs, churches. (Zaslow, 1967, p. 171)

Laco Hunt, (1983) District Administrator for the Mackenzie in 1952, comments positively on the building of southern style housing in Ft. Smith. However, he still had a chore boy — now referred to as a janitor — to feed the wood furnace in his basement every few hours. Not only housing but moving and living allowances were considered necessary in order to entice civil servants from southern Canada to provide the administrative, educational, and health care services previously provided by the missions (Hunt, 1983). Roads were needed to move the supplies required by these southern workers and their families, (Jacobsen, 1971; Fried, 1971). Even more significant was the importance of long-range transportation economies for the resource ventures already begun and the larger scale development anticipated. With the opening and/or improvement of roads to Hay River on Great Slave Lake and around the western shore of the lake, the siting of the new territorial capital (1967) in Yellowknife (where the mines and jobs were expected to be) was now possible, resulting in a final detour around the Ft. Smith portage.

The shock to the community of going from centre of the north, to periphery, is one that Ft. Smith business operator's and other community residents didn't take without a growing resentment. At the same time the replacement process of Canadian institutionalization and control was firmly set in place, seemingly leaving any response dependent on that same government or its employees. Unfortunately, this resentment, in what is not an uncommon "post colonial" dynamic, was often placed inwards at categories of relationship that divided rather than, as formerly, on lifestyles that united, resulting in increasing social disruption. These divisions were exacerbated by legislated definitions of Métis, Indian, and non-status Indians. These legal categories determined who received treaty benefits, who were allowed the right to vote and drink liquor, where one lived, and where (and whether) one could make a living hunting and trapping. Further, when organizations which attempted to work as an entire group, like the early Thebacha Association arose in the Ft. Smith in the 1960s, the Indian agent told the chief, Fred Gibot, that he wasn't to meet with the Métis.

Helm, Rogers, and Smith (1981) use the model of *contact, contact traditional* and *modern* periods to describe contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in the north. This model posits: a) limited contact during the early period except on an occasional basis with traders or with exploring parties sent out by trading companies, b) greater contact with traders in the contact traditional period and increasing contact with missionaries and later the North West Mounted Police (including intermarriage of non-Aboriginal men with local women whose children became the northern Indigenous Métis), and c). in the modern era increased dealing with white traders, including "free traders," followed by government employees sent north to provide federal education, health, game regulation, and welfare programs (Helm et al., 1981). Further, following the signing of Treaty 8 in 1899 and 1900, Indian agents, who held significant authority, became a fixture in the north. Helm, Rogers, and Smith (1981) note that in this modern period, which begins post World War I and continues with the decline of the fur trade in the second quarter of the twentieth century, that:

> the intensity of their instructional and regulatory roles in bringing accommodation and submission of the native people to the Euro-Canadian system far exceeds that of the trader and the missionary of the past. (p.150)

Thus the period of modernization is typified by increasing state control of the north, its' resources, and peoples. An increasing reliance on Western institutions and technology implemented through treaty, legislative, and bureaucratic processes resulting in a form of internal colonization typified by decreasing autonomy of individuals and peoples and an increasing dependence on and control by non-Aboriginal "expertise" and institutions.

Internal colonialism (Hector, 1975; Marquard, 1957; van den Berghe, 1984) in North America is typified by the assumption of control though the structural imposition of institutions of governance and administration over the health, social, educational, and political processes of a people (Blauner, 1969; Churchill, 1998; Frideres, 1988; Thomas, 1966-67 a). Legal and structural devices not only serve significant political control functions but in their underlying assumptions, justify processes which have already been rejected as unacceptable conditions for the larger state and its people in terms of its own colonial history (Tully, 2000). Maintenance of this dynamic occurs by reducing the range of choices that proved adaptive in a healthy environment as traditionally experienced. This dynamic decreases the autonomy of previously independent actors and increases the dependence of the people (Paine, 1977), resulting in the transfer of a colonized mentality. These experiences have psychological ramifications, which encourage manifestations of dependency, and a dialectical interaction of learned helplessness and shame with anger and resentment which is transmitted across generations in a cyclically unhealthy process (Duran & Duran, 2000).

Efforts to work cooperatively to confront these barriers, as for example those imposed by the Indian Act, are challenging in terms of structural constraints such as legal definitions of ethnicity and electoral regulations. These factors often prove divisive in the context of small communities of near relatives. Alfred notes that it is the continuing structuring of First Nations governance by the state controlled and funded system that perpetuates a colonial mentality (Alfred, 1999). Challenging these dynamics is difficult due to the layered structures they are built on, the underlying dynamics, and the perceived costs of change. However, the actual institutional and personal costs in terms of maintaining the status quo are extremely high (Tully, 2000; Ponting, 1996). The justifications of, processes for, and policies that contribute to the dynamics of internal colonization are illustrated tautologically by the explanations used to undermine traditional adaptive mechanisms by controlling institutions administered "on behalf" of Aboriginal peoples. For example, during increasingly difficult trapping conditions in the fifties and sixties, Aboriginal trappers complained about the lack of subsidies for the trapping industry as compared to an industry like farming.

Government policy documents of this time often held what Asch and Smith (1993) refer to as the assumption of inevitability, which basically assumes that there is no future in trapping so why assist Aboriginal trappers in stalling the inevitable. While acknowledged as a historical process, these dynamics remain in place today. For example, at recent meetings of the Akaitcho Tribal Council (Four First Nations including the two in Ft. Smith) when problem solving ran into procedural obstacles based on Western institutions of decision making, several delegates asked, "Why do we continue to do this to ourselves, to let these white forms of organization hold us back from doing what we know needs to be done?" In a more recent meeting of this council, Francois Paulette indicated beforehand that the intent of the meeting was decolonization. Following the arrival of the police on the Smith's Landing Reserve (where the meeting was held) and an evacuation of the reserve due to a nearby forest fire, Francoise commented on this as a matter of colonization as their own knowledgeable Elders (and Grandfathers supporting them) knew more than the police about fire and about taking care of the people. At the same time these are not all encompassing processes, resilience and determination in the maintenance of cultural values, worldview, and identity, as illustrated by the interviews in the previous chapter, remind us that victimization is an overly simplistic label — one that is itself mired in the same processes it attempts to define.

The next chapter addresses modes of response to the material presented in this chapter. This chapter has traced the discourses about the North and northern peoples from the perspective of Euro-Canadian accounts. Strategies used by Euro-Canadian institutions of trade, religion, and governance to define, locate, make use of, assist, control, and develop Aboriginal peoples and their resources are listed below. Colonization is essentially an attempt to control either directly or through re-parenting/replacing local norms with those of the controlling group. These processes involve the transmission of new concepts; in many ways a direct attempt to circumvent parents and transfer Western values through patterns of vertical transmission. This is not to denigrate individual's efforts but rather to say that the screen of assumptions that determine their course of action has had long lasting political, social, and economic consequences. Strategies used by Euro-Canadian institutions, governments, and individuals have included the following:

Strategies of Response

1. Divide and conquer tactics.
2. Taking economic advantage.
3. Missionizing.
4. Discrediting/disrupting spiritual beliefs and practices.
5. Re-parenting/enculturation/assimilation.
6. Paternalism.
7. Intimidation.
8. Ridicule.
9. Racism.
10. Regulation, legislation, and bureaucratic systems.
11. Replacement of Indigenous institutions with western institutions.
12. Co-option.
13. Defusing by talking fast but acting slowly — commission after commission.
14. Science and modernity as authority.
15. Political and economic development based in western assumptions and models.

From the early 1970's and the Paulette case on, in what would have to be a new phase of Helms model, First Nations and Métis leaders from Ft. Smith have been asking for acknowledgement of these processes through discussion, organization, negotiation, and court action. By the 1970s they were quite familiar with the strategies used by Canadian institutions in relation to their people and were looking at new ways of response.

CHAPTER FIVE: STRATEGIES OF RESPONSE, KNOWLEDGE, PERCEPTION AND CONCLUSIONS

The Value of Open Alternatives

Shweder (1996) proposes that what he calls the methods of "true ethnography" act in ways that help us uncover "preferences" and "constraints" (p.18) in views of a shared conception of ideal economic and moral realities. This includes what is (un)known, perceived, articulated and discussed, and acted upon (Shweder, 1996). In this study, strategies aimed at achieving these preferences in light of constraints as experienced, understood, and reinforced within changing social conditions are of particular interest. For example, strategies of response to environmental conditions as well as responses to constraints of government are all pertinent to the discussion and stressed in the Aboriginal accounts I was given: We lived this way, I knew this to be true based on this, we did this in response to trapping restrictions, etc. From this perspective one of the functions of stories is as heuristic devices containing knowledge of alternatives. To the active listener the repeated story gives cultural form to knowledge about animals, weather, game officers and government officials or unusual occurrences. Thus, in this system of knowledge, the story, is one of the media in which transfer of culturally based knowledge and value systems takes place (Barth, 2002; Ridington, 2000).

As Louis Beaver observes, you may not need the story for a long time but it is there when you need it, you recognize it when you see it. Berkes (1998) gives a similar example in terms of stories about caribou hunting told by older Cree men in northern Quebec to respond to younger men who grew up in a period when there were no caribou in their region. When caribou did reappear the younger men, who had not grown up hunting caribou with their fathers, hunted in a manner considered inappropriate by older men (Berkes, 1998). By restoring the old stories which emphasized proper respect, the older men were able to instill appropriate values to a new generation (Berkes, 1998). Eileen Bird's sister-in-law's father, Dene Elder Paul Wright, referred to this process as follows:

> If there's something you know you share that. Because of that knowledge they bring up those young people so if something goes wrong [unusual conditions], they know about it. But you have to bring up young people according to the land. (Dene Nation, 1998).

In this fashion the costs of learning are reduced not only through role modeling and experiential learning, but also through the strength of orality or oral literacy, which preserves the details of the choices made by others under both particular circumstances and varying conditions. Cruikshank describes the stories told by the three Yukon Elders she worked with as providing not only insight on the past but ways of seeing that offered alternative choices to listeners facing current challenges (Cruikshank, 1990).

Waller (1998, 2001) argues that having a range of "open alternatives" to consider in changing conditions is an aspect of what makes for a viable autonomy, in itself important to well-being. This is as true for the healthy functioning of peoples who culturally, economically, and strategically operate as groups as for individuals. Healthy social systems entail a variety of open alternatives which are linked, through tradition, to environment and social memory in an ongoing, adaptive response system (Berkes, 1998; Berkes & Folke, 1998; Folke et al., 2003). At the same time, social rules that allow for variation from the normative values, in response to changing conditions, operate by serving to open up alternative strategies (Kardulias & Shutes, 1997; Shutes, 1997). In this subarctic setting, cultural values hold that collective identity and sharing *and* a high degree of individual autonomy are *both* important in allowing for effective response to changing environmental conditions. Stories of actions by individuals, often someone not thought to have much to offer (an orphan, or someone not physically strong) on behalf of the group are common amongst subarctic peoples, serving as a reminder that everyone has potential — and responsibility — to help the larger group in time of need. The surprising abilities of these orphans or weak ones is like a story held in reserve, ready with more power than is expected when needed. At the same time, also common, are stories of leaders who, through their special qualities of leadership, solved difficult problems facing the larger group.

As Folke, Coldring, and Berkes (2003) note the resilience of socio-ecological systems is influenced by the:

- Ability to respond to uncertainty given changing conditions.
- Nurturing of diversity and alternatives.
- Taking advantage of different forms or traditions of knowledge for learning, and
- Creating opportunities for self-determination (p. 355).

In looking at adaptation and resilience in the context of both coercive and strategic change processes the complexity of dynamics and response is important. Choices take place within knowledge systems that have a body of knowledge and premises to work with and that operate within certain kinds of relationships spread by typical forms of communication processes and institutions (Barth, 2002). In situations of crisis — whether ecological, social, or both — a resilient (rather than rigid) institutional and social memory may serve as what Folke, Berkes, and Coldring (2003) describe as a reservoir of practices, beliefs, relationships, and institutions. Thus, while there are always preferences and constraints, ideals of social and economic organization that allow adjustment to local and larger scale realities, the ability to decide, amongst options, what is the best strategy, given the circumstances, is important for resilient social systems. Looking at both the supports for choices and the impact of those choices on cultural endowments, resources, institutions, and technology allows for further analysis of the balance or imbalances involved in choices made, particularly in times of change. (Hyami & Ruttan, 1985: V. Ruttan, 2003)

As I have shown in the previous chapter, the range of options for Aboriginal people in the Ft. Smith region began to deteriorate in the late nineteenth century, continuing through the mid-twentieth century. Government and other Euro-Canadian institutions attempted to replace traditional institutions and values with those of their own by reducing the opportunities for young people to fully learn traditional value systems and their accompanying skills. For Métis the range of employment opportunities with trading companies and other institutions diminished in the 1920s and 1930s with the increase in employment by trading companies and government of white people and the importation of labourers by freighting companies. Government programs and policies in the twentieth century clearly separated Métis from their Aboriginal cousins based on the definitions and responsibilities of the Indian Act and Treaty 8. For example, when the area of the Salt River settlement was finally given reserve status, long-term Métis residents, including Paul King Beaulieu and Germain Tourangeau were required to move out. For those Métis, Cree, and Chipewyan people living a bush lifestyle with home bases in the then small settlements of Salt River, Ft. Fitzgerald, and Ft. Smith, increasing government regulation of what, when, where and with what equipment one could trap or hunt led to a decrease in the flexibility needed to live well on the land. Further, the experience of schooling both residential and day, required changes in family lifestyles that reduced bush learning and reduced time spent in the bush by all family members. Schooling also attempted to replace knowledge systems, learning, and narrative styles with those of Western culture thought to be essential to assumed modern, resource based (forestry, mining) development. Here, as elsewhere, Elders are concerned about the impact on memory and observational skills (Ohmagari and Berkes, 1997). For example in the earlier quote by Paul Wright (p. 232) he sites learning as occurring in the bush. Nevertheless, the people both individually and collectively responded in ways that would maintain agency and choice making as far as possible.

Maintaining communities in Salt River and in Ft. Fitzgerald as long as possible was one strategy for continuing greater freedom of choice. However, given the regulatory and service provision roles assumed by government, moving people to one community was, from their perspective, a logical response. This move served to decrease reliance on the natural resource based economy where even if fur prices were low previously people could and did live on their hunting while maintaining self esteem as providers and maintaining a critical knowledge base. It was only in the 1960s that it all became too much and some degree of dependency increasingly hard to fight. Factors influencing this process were:

a) decreasing fur prices,
b) increasing bureaucratic control, especially in Ft. Smith, the government headquarters for the NWT,
c) government resistance to subsidizing the fur industry,

d) the requirement that children must be in school in the communities,

e) the assumption that Aboriginal children should be educated for trades for anticipated resource extraction industries

f) policies that clearly separated access to resources and services for Métis and First Nations families and

g) the availability of welfare with concomitant controls placed on acceptance.

During this time the quality of lifestyle and degree of autonomy deteriorated. Families choices were restrained by educational policy and trapping legislation. Further, the contrast between Aboriginal standards of living and those of the growing population of government bureaucrats, the increasing control of "community development" by Euro-Canadian systems, and the racist notions that justified these actions were increasingly harder to ignore (McConnell, 1965). As Asch and Smith note (1993), the assumption by government that there was no future in the fur trade led to a tautological undermining of the system. The replacement institutions of Western society left chiefs with little power and large unmet community needs. By the mid 1970s, however, leaders began to organize in meetings across language groups (Chipewyan, Slavey, Dog Rib, G'wichin, Loucheaux) as the Dene or Dene/Metis, organizing, developing aims, and pursuing them through political and legal channels. The youth of many of these leaders, including Francois Paulette, George Kurszewski, and Henry and Raymond Beaver in itself illustrates a new choice, in essence a flexible, institutional innovation in response to the changing political environment (i.e., power of white systems requiring differing knowledge bases and interaction styles).

Issues of Agency

Agency refers to processes whereby within systems of structure and culture (Archer, 2003), and, I would add, environment, choices are shaped, whether by ones own initiative or other forces, which must/may be responded to by individuals and groups. Choice making is usually responsive to the real or perceived parameters or conditions of choice/constraint, the resources available and the relative meaning or salience of those options. Too often when the word "agency" is used in discussions regarding Indigenous peoples and history, you can almost hear a sigh of relief, "There I've accorded respect for their strategic capabilities, now to the real story." For instance, Shepard Krech III's recent book, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (1999) essentially holds that: 1) Indians have agency, 2) therefore they are no better than us, and 3) therefore guilt is absolved and placed firmly on those who were no better than us, if not worse, as conservationists (Krech, 1999). This sets agency up as a red herring in the argument; "conservation" is a Western culturally based concept that is not synonymous with Indigenous concepts of relationships of reciprocity with environment. While Krech holds that his purpose is to free Aboriginal people from the stereotyped depiction as "noble savage," Hunn places the account in a "new orthodoxy" equally misguided and equally as "morally, politically and theoretically charged" (Hunn, 2002, p.1). Vine Deloria Jr. (2004) refers to *The Ecological Indian*, as "the epitome of anti-Indian propaganda" (p.22) with an "almost deliberate avoidance of relevant scholarship" (p. 22). Hunn argues that the text is biased, is uneven in treatment of the data, and encourages moral judgment by emphasizing the term conservation and failing to contextualize contemporary choices (Hunn, 2002, Hunn et al, 2003). *The Ecological Indian* was extremely well received in Western academic circles with reviews often citing Krech's respect for agency. That the book (1999) also has a political agenda is demonstrated in critical comments on Indigenous political leader's in reference to traditional knowledge, including Cree leader and former Assembly of First Nations National Chief, Mathew Coon Come (p.199). As Brownie and Kelm (1991) point out, sometimes what results is an argument that essentially holds that since Aboriginal people had agency and never quit trying to do things their own way, the impacts of settlement and the moral responsibility for the consequences can be minimized.

In whatever sense the word is used, agency must be situated within sociopolitical and historical contexts that have real consequences in terms of options available or unavailable and often have intergenerational implications. The increased focus on agency and not simply on victimization is important, yet agency must clearly be set within the constraints, challenges, and opportunities of the time (Brownlie and Kelm, 1994). This also means that agency must be placed where the people place it, within their framework of good and appropriate choices based in their perception of the nature of the factors involved, even if this disagrees with a Western "economic analysis' of best (rational) choices. In studying the decision-making strategies of Greek farmers in balancing traditional cultural "preferences" such as the provision of dowries with economic constraints and choices influenced by the agricultural policy of the European Union, Shutes (1997) suggests that "Decision-makers under varying sets of constraints offer the most reasonable and accurate accounts of the interaction between social rules and agricultural strategies" (p.xvii). I have made the same assumption in terms of the preferences and strategies used to live on the land (or alternately in the town) and in reaction to increasing government constraints.

In the Greek study (Shutes, 1997) scrub land not in production is not considered simply a non-agricultural wasteland by local people but is used for a variety of purposes including collecting herbs. It was even harder for the Canadian national park and government administrators that came to Ft. Smith to see, that *all* of the land was being used on a rotating basis for varying purposes over a longer time period in response to habitat and animal cycles. When Wood Buffalo National Park was established in 1922, any Treaty Indian who had not hunted in the park during the previous year was not allowed a license to trap there even if it had been part of their experience to do so, at least part of the time, often for many generations. This same logic was used in the 1980s to deny Raymond Beaver a park hunting license since he had skipped one year while busy working as an elected chief.

Culture, can be understood as an adaptive response, which allows people to hold in memory, traditional values, and shared experience a repertoire of ways of relating to environment, landscape, and others which also allows for the integration of innovation.

> People are presented as ecological decision makers and players in the ecological dynamics of a region . . . people construct a conceptual model which contains rules and guidelines for social behavior and for the manner in which humans interact with the total environment. This model is flexible, and people mold it through successive decisions. (Kardulias and Shutes, 1997, p. 3)

When culture is found in and formed by relationships with land, social rules include rules for relationship not only with people, but also plants, animals, and the land are treated in a culturally normative manner. This is particularly important in sensitive subarctic environments where environmental resources would be depleted if social norms did not reinforce what is good for the land as good for the people and other beings. However, these social norms are formed in interaction with a dynamic experiential base and with traditional knowledge, each refining the other. The decline of beaver by the early thirties after a period of intense trapping pressure illustrates this. Awareness of what was at stake in the Slave River delta near Ft. Chipewyan, where pressure from outside trappers was higher than around Ft. Smith, resulted in a form of beaver wars between Aboriginal and white trappers in which white trappers cabins were burnt and Aboriginal traps lifted (McCormack, 1984). In Ft. Smith the contested nature of truth has been highlighted in the contested and fractious interaction between wildlife managers and Aboriginal knowledge holders. Included below are illustrations of how culturally based social rules and dynamics result in strategies of response that attempt to preserve not only preferred choices but also a range of options.

Strategies of Response

Keeping options open: Working both sides

In 1820, at the time of the Northwest Company/Hudson's Bay rivalry over control of the rich Athabasca area, George Simpson, soon to be HBC Governor Simpson, notes that the Chipewyan, realizing the benefits of competition, "settle among themselves who are to join the French and who the English" (Rich, 1968, p. 358) thus keeping either side from totally defeating the other economically. As Simpson explains:

> "the head of a numerous Family almost invariably attaches so many to one side and so many to the other, and individuals frequently take credit at each Fort and divide their hunt" (Rich, 1968, p. 358).

George Back attributes this phenomenon to the HBC re-entry into the region. The ensuing competition and the resulting increasing use of rum as a trade inducement encouraged a strategy of playing one company off the other, by promising them furs, and giving each company some yet without actually producing any more furs. Speaking of one particular young Chipewyan chief, Back notes:

> The man then has sufficient discrimination to perceive the mutual jealousy and I may say hatred for the contending factions — and has the wisdom and coolness to turn both to his gratification and advantage. (Houston, 1994, p. 70)

After the amalgamation of the NWCo. and the HBC, Francois Beaulieu II who had been strongly allied with the NWCo., as the company of his French father, never again pursued a single course. He saw opportunity in the strategy of working both sides. He was well aware of the tensions between the Oblates and the HBC and used that dynamic to stir up the suspicions of the HBC traders usually resulting in either extra gratuities or employment for himself or his sons. And he kept the HBC guessing as he went back and forth from working independently to working for them. Beaulieu had influence with trappers in several nations including the Chipewyan, Yellowknife, Dogrib, and Slavey. The HBC curried his favor by giving him extra "gifts" and higher rates for furs which Beaulieu came to expect as his due. While damning him for his independence, at the same time, he was often hired by the HBC in order to reduce the competition, again at salaries higher than normal.

A tribe-like status has been attributed to the groups of people attached to the first two Indigenous Métis families in the area. Beaulieu used Salt River as a home base while traveling and working, hunting and collecting furs throughout the Mackenzie as did the Mandeville's, based on the Little Buffalo River. Devine refers to this type of strategy as the development of Proto-Métis hunting bands (Devine, 2004). However, local Métis clearly reject the "proto" and instead point to an early process of Indigenous métissage or ethnogenesis occurring here (Devine, 1998). By operating in groups, these associated people could use a variety of strategies and connections with both white and Dene relatives. Beaulieu created opportunity for his group by settling near the Slave River portages and establishing a new route where he could broker extra carriers to the Company and also sell salt and pemmican to them. Further, Hanks notes that, "The significance of Francois Beaulieu goes beyond the man, however, for it was as head of the Beaulieu family and as a Chipewyan-Métis trading chief, that his example established a pattern of Métis leadership that endured beyond his time"

(Hanks, n.d., p 1). While certainly influential for the Métis, his model also influenced Indian leaders like Pierre Squirrel who also found ways to work between the police, traders, and the church who were often suspicious of each other.

Labour: Strikes and working slowly

Historians often refer to the "half-breed boatmen" as remarkably docile (Innis, 1927/1999); this was perhaps due to their acceptance of a lifestyle that appeared demeaning from Euro-Canadian eyes. Later on, in the context of the desire to move to steam, the boat men are referred to as remarkably difficult (Zaslow, 1971). However, these men had their own reasons for engaging in the boat crews; as Frank Laviolette notes, "Them days, people, some of them say it's more fun more than anything else" (See Appendix D).

The French, Métis, and Indian men who worked the boat brigades had their own strategies for dealing with any conditions where they felt they were being treated unfairly including grumbling, work slowdowns, direct complaint, and then work stoppages. An account of labour strife while building a post at Great Bear Lake for Alexander Mackenzie, a cousin of the explorer with the same name (see Keith, 2001), provides an interesting example. It was told to Father Emile Petitot (Government of the NWT, 1977) by one of the men who had been there, quite likely Francois Beaulieu II. Mackenzie is described as not only dressed ridiculously, but as both very vain and very mean. Mackenzie's own journals seem to bear this accusation out (Keith, 2001). His employees were always hungry, living on small fish referred to as herring while, "he himself would eat juicy red meat, caribou tongues and cake" (Government of the NWT, 1976, p. 24). Angry when a French Canadian voyageur exclaims at the unfairness of Mackenzie's accusation that they aren't working hard enough, Mackenzie tells them to "Shut up and get back to work" (p. 24) and then seriously wounds a man with his sword. Ready to leave Mackenzie and go live with a nearby Indian group, a junior officer pacifies the group by bringing them meat, attending to the wound, and promising no repeat of this kind of incident as long as they don't tell anyone about it. They agree to "regain their strength" but only if Mackenzie behaves as he should: “from now on he must treat us as like human beings” (p.25). While this was an extreme case, conflicts over food sufficiency and quality were common.

This was still the case in 1906 when Ernest Thomas Seton complained about his Beaulieu guide’s resistance to him, including work slowdowns, because he didn’t supply them with beans every day (Seton, 1911). He considered them ungrateful, that he was giving them better and more variety of foods than they’d ever had before, while they expected the traditional beans that filled them up (Seton, 1911). In the early twentieth century, if the men working in the bow of the steamboats as depth sounders weren’t happy with the Captain’s treatment the sounding would be intermittently given as a foot off the mark causing slowdowns as the boat hit bottom. Arthur Beaulieu mentions the work slowdown he and his brother Freddy engaged in when working on the new cathedral in Ft. Smith for a boss from Quebec who they felt was abusive towards them. And in 1971, when Raymond Beaver was told that he and Louis Brown weren’t allowed to leave the fire crew on the mid-September date they had agreed to work to, Raymond, Louis, and eight other men simply quit and walked out of the bush, forty miles across country.

Signing Treaty 8: They Knew What They Were Doing

Despite the problems with implementation of Treaty 8 over the many years since its signing, most First Nations people believe that signing the treaty in 1899 was a choice made on their behalf. Although the treaty party was only at Ft. Fitzgerald for one day, people knew the treaty party was coming; they talked about it, maybe dreamt on it. Many community members believe that the men who signed the treaty — Pierre Squirrel, Michael Mamdrille (Mandeville) and William Kiskorray (Susie Marie), men who knew something — would not have done so without a good reason and that they did so for them and other future generations. As Edna Beaver explains it:

> Our Elders would always keep in mind the future generation, so a lot of things that happen today could affect those generations ahead, the people, the babies that are not yet born. They think about making the right decisions. You always think about the unborn, how it will affect them, whether it be in nature, in self, in how people make choices. For example, if I’m given a paper, my treaty

> rights, I don't sign them for me today. I sign them for the future of my grandchildren. When they made a treaty with Canada they didn't think about themselves at that time, they thought about me, my kids.

Frank Laviolette reminds me that the men who signed the Treaty weren't stupid; they wouldn't have signed it just for the five dollars everyone gets once a year. They must have known something, seen ahead, or had something else in mind. They chose to sign the treaty because of that, what they knew.

> I think if you look at things today. Where Raymond's working today [Salt River First Nation] and what he's working on. It's our great grandfathers that set it up for five dollars [treaty payment]. You know what I mean? If they didn't *do it*, it wouldn't be there *now*. They must have something, that five dollars didn't mean much. But it means *a lot*, what we're doing today. You know? That's the way I look at it. And they were talking about *animals*, like fur and stuff. So . . . it's really something our great-grandfathers left us.

Thus signing treaty is seen not just as something that Squirrel and the others had to do, although there was considerable pressure to sign, but something they chose to do for their own reasons that should be respected as such. And an ongoing oral tradition of what it could mean for the future was stressed by those who signed the treaty and those who came after them. As Francois Paulette (2001) recalls:

> One Elder, in particular, stands out as impacting me strongly, Joe Charlo of Dettah. One time with just about twelve of us present, Joe said, "I will present to you how I got this knowledge of treaty." And he patted his head and said "How the treaties were made before is imprinted in my mind." Suzie Drygeese, who was at the 1900 signing [Ft. Resolution], called for me as a young man to come to him. I was surrounded by chiefs. After breakfast he sat me down, "I'm going to tell you a story, you will remember, you will remember what I tell you." He put his hand on my head and then started to speak and to talk about the treaty. He said, "Now you are going to remember, I want you to remember so your children can remember this." It was important to remember, as the treaty would guarantee our rights.

The issue of broken treaty promises has been documented repeatedly (Daniel, 1999; Fumoleau, 1974/2004; NFB, 2000; Supreme Court, 1973, 1977; Schaeffer, 2002). Working on getting the government to live up to its promises, to show that it respected the "honour of the Crown" was continuous from the time of Chief Squirrel. Squirrel first asked for a response to the reserve lands he and his people had selected in 1916 but any response was stalled by government due to the planning for an anticipated buffalo reserve. However, he and others continued to work on getting the Crown to honour its commitments for year after year, eventually, in 1941, getting a partial settlement, a reserve at Salt River. In the last few years two Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claims have finally been signed for the rest of the land due to the continuing effort of negotiators and chiefs over a twenty-five year period.

Resistance through Personal Integrity and Authority

Elsie Yanik (Laroque), originally from Ft. Fitzgerald, explains that leaders must have good values and be very spiritual; this is what makes them capable of being good leaders (Yanik, 1993). Fred Dawson describes Pierre Squirrel who was chief for close to forty years this way. Squirrel, well known as a spiritual leader, known for leading church services in Salt River and holding strong medicine power (*inkonze*), is described as a good leader.

> Old Chief, Pierre *Tiso* (Squirrel). He was the only real man who lived on this earth, even the police did not have authority over him. Once when there was a caribou hunt, he was living in Salt River, and the hunters arrived in Fort Fitzgerald with the meat. He heard they were drinking so he started walking to there, when he met the police. He told them that he was walking to them because he heard that they had jailed the young men who were to go hunting caribou. He told the police that they would have to let them go because they were to go hunting. They aren't here for you to keep he said, he talked like a real man. So the police let them go, they packed and left at night. The police have no authority over that Chief. He told them, you work and everything is provided for you, food and supplies are given by which you travel. These men aren't like that. They are going for caribou because their children have to eat.

> You jail them so children don't eat. You won't jail them; they will leave to go hunting. (Dolan, 1993)

As a very young man Squirrel was influenced by Beaulieu in the last years of his life. That he may have been a role model is quite probable given Squirrel's later roles as a hunting leader, a holder of medicine (*inkonze*), and as a church leader. Because people knew he had power and could do things to help, that he could see into future, that he was good at organizing matters that pertained to group needs, and that he was effective at dealing with Western officials Squirrel's leadership was accepted and only challenged at the end of his long life. Leaders in those days tended to live long and be capable until late in life; additional evidence of the strength of their knowledge. Francois Beaulieu, Joseph Beaulieu, Paul King, and Pierre Squirrel all lived to be a hundred. Pierre Squirrel also had personal qualities that were appealing. Those that still remember him, as small children recognized him as a kind man who enjoyed telling children stories in the evening. He and Chief Abram (Abraham Deneyutchele) continued the process of standing up to Western authorities in ways that apparently commanded some respect.

Self-sufficiency, Taking Care of Themselves

All the participants in the study emphasized the strength, skills and hard work of the women. Métis Elder, Elsie Yanik (Laroque) (1990), describes the processing of meat and fish, tanning, sewing, and making of crafts that exhibited both beauty and utility including baskets and bags. She notes one can go on and on with the stories of what the women did, remarking, "The women played a great part in this life. They were very hard working women, as I well know" (p. 264). Elsie was perhaps thinking both of her own mother Mary LaRoque and her aunt Dorothy, who didn't appreciate Mrs. Godsell's charity and also of her own hard work with her husband and children while trapping out towards the barren lands.

While men and women had roles that they typically performed, both men and women knew how to carry out a variety of activities. However, usually tasks were distributed by considering the most efficient use of skills. While trapping was an individual enterprise, meat was always shared with whoever one was with. The best hunters would hunt more than the other men, who in turn would provide them with dog food or hunt small game animals. Women would snare rabbits, process hides, sew, prepare food, and take care of children. Women, with or without children, were often by themselves for considerable periods of time. During these times they did everything that needed to be done, as the men also did for themselves while they were away. This meant that while there were typical roles for men and women and for people with particular types of skills most people also knew how to do whatever needed to be done.

Eliza Schaeffer passed away a year ago, but before she did she lived to sign the Land Claim between Salt River First Nation and the Government of Canada. Her first husband, "died young" and Eliza went on to another marriage with a white man, a former buffalo warden, who she pushed into learning how to trap as a way of making a living. They had eight children and she had ten in all.

Out in the bush, her first husband was gone for a few days to help another family with a sick child. As she recalls:

> When my husband returned to me after helping over there with the child, I already had one child, a girl, and I was pregnant so we came back this way. He returned to me, we brought down the tent, packed and my husband started loosing blood through the mouth. I put him into the sled, and started mushing the dogs. When we got to Salt Plains, there were many buffalo lying there on the road. The dogs got very loud and excited. So I tied the running rope from the sled head to a tree. My husband told me to take the gun and shoot over the top of the buffalo, because then they will run away. So I took his gun and started shooting over top of them. They took off. After the buffalo left, I went back to the sled and the dogs got away from me. I grabbed the sled head rope and the dogs were dragging me. My husband was very sick with blood coming from his throat. That's what I went through when I got here. (Dolan, 1993)

Eliza, like many other women at the time, was strong and resourceful taking what came along and dealing with it.

> I used to have my baby at home all the time. Doctor told me, that time, don't go in the hospital here, he told me. It's not very clean for me, eh, that's what he

> say. So, if you sick, he said, just send for me, he say, I could look after you, he told me. And you could look after yourself better, he said. So that's the way I did it. I got ten kids all together. (Dolan, 1993)

Other women, including Bella Beaulieu, Victoria Beaulieu, and Marianne Sanderson were known as midwives. Sometimes Bella would be brought, by dog team, from Salt River over to Fitz. for a birth. At the same time women had babies out on the trap line, sometimes alone, sometimes with their husbands for help. In recent years, however, the birth of babies in the community has become a contested and expensive service. Most births occur in hospital in Yellowknife, as local doctors refuse to do deliveries without surgical back up, while two local midwives have spent years struggling for acceptance by the Territorial and local health system.

Belief and Prayer: In Our Own Way

Chief Squirrel served not only as a chief but also as a priest, as had Francois Beaulieu before him. He held Sunday services, preached, and read (syllabics) from the Book. He was also well known as a medicine man. In other words he acted as a leader within the cultural model of leadership. Magloire Beaver encouraged Louis to pray, to start and end his day in a good way and by praying to not feel alone in the bush, rather able to go on with what you are doing with purpose. Magloire, as did other trappers, went to church regularly when they were in town; but Magloire also told his daughter Edna that you don't have to be in church to pray. Arthur remembers that:

> in those days they don't use beads or a book to talk to God. They love God in their heart. But they talk about what God would make and everything. Them they talk to God *in person* like. Like he's *here*, they're talking.

Many people had and still have a strong attachment to the Catholic Church. Like Maryanne and Emilia, they appreciated the times the Grey Nuns helped them out or were kind to them. Yet many continued with their own ways too. The importance of prayer and faith was essential to Mary Heron's grandmother, as well, but her daughter (Eleanor McNeil) experienced hurt and judgment. In the following narrative her father, Alexie Jeremie, places the situation in the context of his own understanding of

Christ's teachings. Similarly to the teachings of the Elders, sometimes you have to think about what is meant while making your own decisions about what to do.

Mrs. McNeil: Being a Christian and Resisting the Church

> When Mary [Heron] was six years old the old man sent Mary to the Public School [Protestant]. They left me [the priests] for twelve years for that. They left me, for twelve years they don't want me to go to church. They told me not to come to church so I never used to go to church. I just stayed home . . .
>
> Mary turned to Catholic after she was eighteen. After that the Father told me to come back and I told him, "I still got two more [children who were Protestants] and I don't want to go back." I told him, "Could be hard, you know, when they leave you for *nothing*." Said to me, "If you die they are not going to bury you in the cemetery," he said. "They're going to bury you by the slough down there," he told me. So I told him, "It doesn't matter where they bury me." I says, "I won't know after I die." He says, "You're not a good Catholic." He says, "That's why you did that [let daughter Mary go to Protestant school]. "I didn't do that, "I said. "My husband said that, not me," I told him.
>
> So like that, I went to any church after that. They all pray to God, so I think they're all the same. When the first thing, the Father said to me, I was crying. My old Dad [Alexis Jeremie] says to me, "Don't cry my girl," he says. "When Jesus is leaving, the last thing he told the people is 'Be good to your neighbor.' Don't be hating them [the priests] for it, go in the church, any church."
>
> One Easter Sunday I went with Matilda [youngest daughter] to the Anglican church in the morning, when I came home Teddy [son] said to me, "Come to our church with me Mom," he says. So I went to the Catholic Church. Easter Sunday and we're having supper and Mrs. Frank Bailey says to me, "Mrs. McNeil, I'm going to the Baptist Church will you come along?" I says, "Ok, I'll go." So, I went to three different churches.

Working the System Adaptively by Cooperating

In many ways people working in the bush and people working in the town complemented each other. They each filled an economic and social niche and in this way they covered all the bases. Everyone had relations in both camps, although the town Métis were perceived to have more status — as Emilia said, "more like a white man." However, they could fall back on the bush lifestyle when times were tough. Rene Mercredi, Emilia's brother, took this route when opportunities in the community were limited in the 1930s. Although he had a good education for the time and his grandfather, Pierre Mercredi, was a Chief Trader for the HBC and his father, Isidore Mercredi, an independent tradesman, Rene trapped in the early part of adulthood. When government jobs in wildlife management became open later in life he switched. The Kennedy brothers, Isidore Mercredi's grandson's and also grandsons of Métis trader Alec Kennedy, took three routes: the eldest, Pie (Phillip), trapped with his father and still traps today, Eugene and Charles with more schooling became blue-collar (Eugene) and white-collar (Charles) workers, both now retired. Men like Arthur Beaulieu and Louis Brown did a little bit of everything: trapping, working for traders, fire crew, construction, and other wage labour. Arthur takes pride in his "steady working" and doesn't diminish it by stressing its seasonal nature as he is working, he is trapping in the winter. Writing in 1987, Rees describes work lives such as that of Arthur Beaulieu, as a highly adaptive pattern reflective of complex economic phenomenon including the periodic cycles of "boom and bust."

> Many native northerners entering the wage economy have done so without abandoning their land based activities. In effect they maintain a fallback position, and may even regard paid work as a supplement to their traditional way of life. Some "jacks-of-all-trades" have a range of general skills that enable them to take part in an annual sequence of both formal and subsistence activities. They may hunt, trap, or fish part of the year, take simple wage employment for another, and receive unemployment benefits for some of the rest. (p. 7)

Arthur's work life is a perfect example of this pattern, that of a "dual economy" (Usher, 1981). This was not a dysfunctional pattern but rather should be framed as

Rees (1987) suggests as, "adaptive when infrequent employment opportunities present themselves randomly or in a seasonal cycle" (p. 7). Further, it provided the cash to support being in the bush even when fur prices were low. And people shared what they had, as Gabe Sepp recalls:

> In the old days, when somebody kills a moose, in the summertime, everybody will go there, not just one or two. The people never wasted anything, they used everything. Everyone will go there and get a little chunk of meat to take home. That's the way it worked. Everything was shared. You'd see a bunch of women there all day, cooking, having fun, stay there all day . . . come home at night. You don't see that anymore. (Maldaver, 1993, p. 100)

Given the interconnection of the community, the benefits of having relatives who brought in meat and exchanged it with others who grew vegetables or had cash is a good strategy especially given variable bush and labour conditions

For active trappers this type of exchange with men who worked primarily in the community proved beneficial for all. Men working in town were often supplied with beaver trapped and brought in to town by active trappers. These trappers would trade beavers to their relatives or friends who had unused beaver seals and would be given a little cash in return. Alternatively, fur might be saved out in the bush to be brought in when the beaver population was low perhaps due to diseases like tularemia. Looking at an old Parks Canada document which listed the names of trappers and their catch made Raymond Beaver laugh. He knew that some men listed as getting beaver were too old to even go out trapping at that time. Given that sometimes different people were good at trapping different things, someone who was good at trapping beaver might trade beaver for muskrat skins. The distribution of furs would be adjusted out in the bush to meet the current quotas. Justification for doing so was based in treaty, in the unfairness of the regulations, and in traditional values regarding helping each other out.

However, the implications of treaty as applied to hunting and trapping continued to aggravate people who had been told that there would be no restrictions on their way of making a living. During testimony in the Benoit case challenging the obligation to pay tax, Francois Paulette recalls his father, Johnny Paulette's annoyance at the tax on furs trapped in Alberta and his response. He explains:

> Whatever you made on your furs, the Park's game warden would take five percent as a royalty. If you made one hundred dollars they would take five dollars . . . My father said: "We were told . . . we will not take back the money. Yet this money that you take back (fur royalty) and give to the queen, when treaty was made we were told we wouldn't have to pay. Why does she give us money (treaty payment) and then take it back?" Because of this my father would take the furs to my uncle who trapped in the NWT and he would sell the furs. He would take his most valuable furs there and leave the less valuable ones to show to the park game warden. (Paulette, 2001)

Trading on the side was encouraged by free traders including the Ryan Brothers and Frank Conibear, who would manipulate the location of where the fur was reported to be caught dependent on the differing regulations in Alberta and the NWT. Aware that this might be going on, police often checked people's sleighs as they came into Ft. Smith. Usually these side deals involved meeting in the bush where money and furs were exchanged.

These strategies involved thinking through personal response in terms of what Blum (1994) refers to as the "moral perceptions" of the men involved, most of whom held honesty and helping others as strong value preferences. When met with situations which seemed very unfair, the desire to help others (and self) outweighed any allegiance to systems perceived as unjust and essentially dishonest, particularly in light of treaty promises regarding non-interference in hunting rights. Thus a strategy of working quietly amongst themselves without, as Frank Laviolette refers to it, "squealing" on each other developed in response to the increasing regulation of access to land and animals. These norms explain some of Magloire Beaver's reaction in the late 1930s to the behavior of men from Ft. Chipewyan, trapping near him, who were breaking open beaver houses and taking all the beaver. While he didn't like what they were doing he didn't inform on them while they, in response to the warden's aggressive questioning, let on that Magloire used snares.

While the strategies discussed represent an attempt to find a way to work around the system it would be very misleading to think that these responses compensated for the impact of these policies. Imposed systems of management are not usually adaptive or responsive to local systems of knowledge (Berkes, 1998, 1999; Nadasdy, 2003) as was the case here as well. Prior to the establishment of Wood Buffalo Park and the setting up of group trapping areas and registered traplines in the Northwest Territories the environment allowed for a common property regime. For example, respect for each other, as highly autonomous yet with relations of responsibility to each other along with knowledge of the habits, practices, and preferences of other men, resulted in little interference with other hunters and trappers systems. The establishment of group trapping areas and registered traplines was attributed to the intent of government and church officials to reduce the impact of white trappers and of over-harvesting. Their assumption was that trappers will only conserve if the trapline area is their own individual property. However, it was foremost an attempt to get trapping under control, regulated, managed, and carried out within government policy. While registered lines did lead to greater territoriality and competitiveness, nevertheless this is still not considered proper behavior according to traditional social rules.

Ways of Dealing with White People and Institutions

For Aboriginal knowledge holders in Ft. Smith, the struggles over natural resources and decision-making based on science knowledge and bureaucratic practice remains very contested. The unwillingness to believe the accumulated wisdom of generations of experience on the land in the context of actual rather than theoretical understanding is perceived as arrogant in the extreme and as an almost childlike immaturity to refuse to receive knowledge from those who know. Local men experience the employees of Western institutions as typically saying they know how to do something when they don't, claiming to be friends when they often aren't, and as refusing to learn from experience. This goes hand in hand with a perception that white people brag, exagerate their abilities and knowledge, don't really listen, and insist on trial and error learning when they don't have to.

Additionally, social dynamics were influenced in that non-Aboriginal community members were usually employed by institutions whose values and aims were/are at odds with those of Aboriginal people. This was particularly the case in terms of culturally based beliefs regarding land, education, economic development, decision-making, and political structures. This set up a double barrier to relations with non-Aboriginal people both as individuals and as representatives of bureaucratic institutions with primarily southern-based goals, procedures, and policy. A good example is that of early land use planning. The need for planning was taken for granted as needed by government employees but was seen as controversial by Aboriginal northerners. The assumption of the inherent benefits of planning and permit systems on where and how one lives and of the value of modern economic development rather than the sustainability of traditional land use activities and Aboriginal lifestyles proved a site of control in the 1960s (Asch & Smith, 1993; Rees, 1987).

Rees (1987) holds that differences in world-view "significantly influence people's views on the appropriate institutional and procedural arrangements for northern land use planning" (p. 3). This statement could be made about many of the government programs and services. As a result over the years many non-Aboriginal employees expressed frustration with Aboriginal obstacles to the operation of bureaucratic systems and to their use of consensus based decision making and other "small-scale" views on government (Dacks, 1988; G. White, 2000). At the same time, Aboriginal residents have expressed frustration with the continuing failure of bureaucrats to "get it," despite repeating the same concerns and aims to them year after year. This situation has been experienced by many non-Aboriginal government employees as stressful, resulting in the perception of demanding work environments, and as aggravating in the extreme to many Aboriginal residents and organizations. Many strategies for dealing with southern Canadians and their institutions were developed over the years. They include the following:

1. Cooperating amongst ourselves.
2. Cat and mouse tactics.
3. Beating them at their own game.

4. Changing alliances and identities as opportunities arise.
5. Bull shitting or fooling them.
6. Anger and resentment.
7. Not taking it, storming.
8. Refusing control through personal integrity.
9. Maintaining pride.
10. We knew when it's all talk (Either they're bragging or they say they're going to help us when they're not).
11. Trying to communicate and teach them.
12. Trying to do right, their way.
13. Pulling in to one's own self and family
14. Humour, joking about them, how they do things.
15. Going about our business and not bothering about them.
16. Riding it out, they'll be gone soon.
17. Maintaining layered selves – you think you know me but you don't.
18. Resistance and organizing.
19. Court challenges.
20. Continuing to tell our own stories.

Many people chose to dismiss difficult white people as simply strange or just crazy, knowing that they wouldn't be in Ft. Smith for more than a few years. Some tried to do what was expected of them, to not make waves, to avoid upsetting government officials. Eileen Bird Lines tried to please her school teachers although she remembers being unhappy in school the whole time. Others simply lived in their own world of family and ignored other segments of the community; some actively resisted. Francois Paulette told my children, at first laughingly, about how in residential school in Ft. Chipewyan he was considered a trouble maker. At night the Nuns had all the other boys circle his bed and pray for him. Going on he described the many times he had "gotten the strap" and how finally in public school at fourteen and over six feet tall, he grabbed on to the strap as it hit his hand, held it, and told the teacher: "Don't ever do that again." Earlier, Paul King took his two sons, Francois and

Jean, out of residential school in Ft. Vermillion after he found them left in a shed with the fishing nets. And Laura Loutit laughingly told me about getting down off the bed in the hospital where she had been forced to go for the delivery of her ninth child, after delivering the rest at home, and delivering the child herself. Raymond Beaver tells Pat Lucy's story about a snobbish biologist.

> Apparently the biologist had asked Pat Lucy, the cook and camp manger, at WBNP's Hay Camp to find him a place to sleep alone and to set his place for meals separately as the way the men ate disturbed him. Pat Lucy, an Irishman, said, "Hell no, you'll sleep in the bunk-house with the men and eat at the table all together." Hearing about his attitude, the two Simpson brothers decided to play a joke on him.When the steaks came for dinner they grabbed them with their hands and using exaggerated sounds and motions gobbled them down, having a good laugh later.

This response indicates, similarly to that reported by Francois Beaulieu a hundred years earlier (see p. 240), that while we might agree to work for you we expect to be treated "as human beings."

Impacts

These dynamics, in the colonial context, can create not only resistance but may also lead to an experience of anger turned inwards at self and community affecting community well-being and resilience (Alfred, 1999; Bastien, 2000; Battiste, 2000b). While calling for a change in thinking, Strater Crowfoot (1997) describes his experience as a chief with the impact on his community of "the cynical, defensive, dependent, entitlement mindset that has been inculcated in us by the *Indian Act* regime" (p. 323). Crowfoot (1997) emphasizes that the colonial process has reduced capacity by undermining traditional decision-making and social control institutions, encouraging an angry dependency and competition for resources (including that of the position of chief) between families, fostering a lack of trust in each other, the leaders, and their culture. Ft. Smith has not been immune from these processes and still is not, although the period from the late fifties to the early eighties, during which the value system of the people itself was directly attacked, appears to have been the most difficult. As Maria Brown noted, values have changed — now people only think of their own family, while before people would look out for each others' children — telling them to go home if they saw them at the busy boat yard down by the river. Cornel West (1994, 1996) speaks of the nihilism and nepotism which often results from this type of situation, where doubt, suspicion, resentment of each other, and factionalism hamstring efforts at confronting larger issues. The community has experienced and continues to experience this dynamic as witnessed in recent First Nation election and post-election control battles including charges of financial irregularity.

A climate of suspicion has developed in recent years between Métis and First Nations organizations over land claims processes (formerly shared land must now be claimed separately). Community-wide boards for health and education services, which include representation from each body of the community (Town, First Nations, and Métis) are often fraught with conflict. There appears to be/have been little understanding of the experiences and the perceptual context of local experiences in the economic, social, and political history of the community by people coming from "outside." In the context of relations between Aboriginal governments and the state this leads to a form of victim blaming, which government then attempts to find/impose a fix for, as witness the recent failed *Indian Act* governance legislation in Canada.

Phillip Godsell (1939, 1942), a former Bay man in Ft. Smith, noted the large profits made by the traders and the divide and conquer strategy that was part of their success. This dynamic continues to haunt the community. A Métis man running a small business described how people supported him at first. However, when he started to succeed gossip, suspicion, and jealousy increased eventually leading people to buy his product down south although his prices were comparable. As Raymond Beaver explains this dynamic is influenced by the following:

> In Ft. Smith if a business starts up people immediately think they're being cheated. They don't understand the business must make a profit and it's hard to compete with big city business. They were cheated by the Hudson's Bay Company and got used to their tactics of overcharging for everything.

> Especially they were cheated if they were an alcoholic as people knew they would trade for less as they needed money for drinking.

Dependency is an issue that Aboriginal leaders struggle with. In many ways it is the logical conclusion of Canadian government programs aimed at getting people off the land. Whether it was, in the case of WBNP, so that the land could be free for animals in a "wilderness" park, the assumption that there was no future for the fur trade (Asch & Smith, 1993), or to deliver religion, education, and later health care and social services in central locations the effect was to undermine traditional institutions and relationships.

Dr. Bourget, Indian Agent in Ft. Resolution, points to the 1928 flu as having had a detrimental impact on the independence of the people. Dealing with grief, weakened health, and mounting debts as a response to the decreased fur taken in the year after the flu, he notes in his 1930 report increasing "resentment," "arrogance," and "loss of initiative" (Fumoleau, 1974/2004, p. 509). At the same time, government intervention served to reduce autonomy. An interesting example occurred in the late 1930s. A group of Chipewyan people, trading out of Ft. Fitzgerald, were forced by police to come in from the tree-line area where they had always lived because of deaths due to hunger. These people, sometimes referred to as the "Caribou Eaters" for their reliance on caribou, did not see the point of going back to the town and resisted. Their livelihood, caribou and the furs used to trade for goods, were found in their bush homeland. However, the police who were sent to rescue them saw their mission differently. After taking their guns away, the people were forced to come in closer to town where they could more easily receive government assistance (Nataway & Unka, 1973). Accepting assistance sets the control structure firmly within Western systems of government, law, and justice; by not respecting peoples' own institutions traditional systems are undermined; as a "solution" attempts are made to replace them with Western Institutions. This process weakens the long term resilience of traditional institutions and lifestyles and faith in themselves and their leaders.

The processes of holding elections amongst very small groups of related people can be very hard on family networks; inevitably family members run against each other. These problems are inherent in the Indian Act and the political system it mandates. Overcoming family divisions in Aboriginal communities has been described as a major factor in healthy futures (Wary, 1998). Taaike Alfred (1999) has noted the importance of an Aboriginal leadership responsive to traditional values. Francois Paulette, as a young chief, ended up with a drinking problem. While he has over twenty-five years of recovery, it took years to deal with. His recovery was based in the strengths he had learned from his father and his belief in traditional values. From his perspective, the only way to deal with these dynamics is to focus on living your life the best way you know how. Raymond Beaver is still reeling from what he experiences as the disrespect shown by Western systems to the contextual and experiential knowledge based system he relies on. Nevertheless, he still hopes he can help others with these dynamics as he expresses below:

> To do it yourself, forces you to look at the situation, if that's the case, how do we [as leaders] go about it? You're getting the input; they are the ones giving it. Dependency will continue as long as everyone thinks, "as long as I get what I want for myself that's the right way." People are undervaluing themselves, what they can do. If you can't say no for what isn't possible you're not helping things. I'll go to bat for them but if it's not possible it's better to tell them the truth. (R. Beaver, 8/2003)

For Eileen Lines, the silencing of community history and pride experienced in her schooling in Ft. Smith made her doubt herself as an Aboriginal person. However, eventually the questions that remained led her to seek University degrees in both education and native studies. Elders, including those interviewed for this study, look with sadness on this process, pity for their children, and hope that they can make a difference by sharing what they know.

The result of a decreasing experience of life on the land in response to government regulation and centralization includes:

- going from an essentially common property model to private or band-owned property,
- from collective sharing of meat while respecting autonomy in trapping and personal decision-making to private finances, relief or band-sponsored

economics, and a decreased respect for autonomous decision making by government agencies,

- from a rich knowledge and learning base on the land to a weak education in the community, and
- from strong family and group interaction to weakened ties and increased friction.

As Adger (2000) notes, "social resilience is the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change" (p. 347). Was resilience affected in this community during changing conditions? Definitely, several of the interview participants talked about the bad times, the resultant anger, and the seeming inability or unwillingness of people to help themselves. Social, economic, and justice statistics confirm this pattern. This, however, does not mean that agency or capacity for resilience has disappeared individually or collectively.

These political, economic, and social processes, particularly in the twentieth century, influence how local people see their choices and whether they experience a healthy range of open alternatives. "The ability to respond to uncertainty given changing conditions" (Folke et al, 2003, p. 355), is a characteristic of resilient socio-ecological systems, an important aspect of self-determination whether at the individual or group level. Locus of control (Rotter, 1979) as opposed to learned helplessness (Seligman, 1975) is important to resilient healthy human beings and communities. Further, a resilient sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) contributes to a sense of cultural efficacy (L. Ruttan, 2001), which unites cultural identity, knowledge systems, and behavior. Psychospiritual resources are tied to resilience in ways (Richardson et al, 1997) that implicate the destructive influence of the attempted erosion of culturally based value systems through the processes of Western institutions and programs. In response we see a resurgence of interest in and practice of Aboriginal spirituality. At the same time, the last thirty years has seen the formation of increasingly stronger Aboriginal organizations, (although based on identity as defined by the Indian Act) who now have their own lands and financial base.

"Creating opportunities for self-determination" is an aspect of resilient social and ecological communities (Folke et al, 2003, p. 355). These opportunities add to the range of alternatives that people perceive as available. This includes efforts to renew bio-psychospiritual wellness (Richardson et al, 1997) by restoring traditional values of responsibility and leadership (Alfred, 1999) and replacing identities of shame with identities of pride based in culture and ethnicity. Aboriginal organizations struggle with complex issues in terms of choice making, given competing institutional value systems and processes which undermine their operation and, at times, result in energy sapping political struggles within or between groups. Although control is being regained, the current system is a mix of dynamics that both foster resilience along with dynamics that serve as an eroding force.

Abu-Lughod challenges us to consider these issues by acknowledging the complexity of competing demands, value systems, and responses.

> Equally important are the ways that people preserve historical continuity and meaning through resilience. Long-standing practices and beliefs resurface with creative regularity. The tensions and problems of post-colonialism are legion, but the practical ways that people find continuities and creative spaces within these conditions – while expanding and elaborating their senses of agency – have only recently been opened to investigation and theorization by cultural anthropologists. The careful study of these developments quickly reveals a complex web of motivations and outcomes. Simplistic notions of subversion or resistance are replaced by more nuanced understanding of how different forms of aspiration or subversion may be at odds with and complicate each other over time. (Knauft, 1997, p. 288)

These contradictions are experienced in tensions regarding past and future. People are choosing in different ways today partly due to constraints but often also due to perceptions about pursuing their own best interests in new ways as the development of diamond mines in the Northwest Territories attests to.

Re-Storying

As this research highlights, despite the influence of Western institutions, the stories are still there. Can re-storying be a useful way for people to envision future? Many Aboriginal leaders, scholars, and communities have looked at this question. In discussing Pomo author Greg Sarris' (1994b) novel, *Grand Avenue*, Burnham (2003) notes that the interconnected community of people Sarris describes are bound together in ties of relationship that have been silenced by the colonial process of erasure of history. As Burnham describes, Sarris' novel succeeds in that:

> it acts like the baskets used in former times to contain medicine, and seeks to extract the poisons of fear and anger that separate the members of this family and community from each other, and to transform those poisons through an interwoven story into a medicine with the political and spiritual power of *restoration* [italics added] (p. 27).

"The effect of imposing bounded and separate racial categories on to the family" (Burnham, 2003, p. 31), similarly to the experience in Ft. Smith, silences the "connections that bind people, stories, and baskets together and give them meaning" (Burnham, 2003, p. 31). In Ft. Smith reconnecting the stories involves talking past imposed identities including those involved in the settling of land claims. As one of Sarris's (1994b) characters says to another, "Stories, the true stories, that's what we need to hear. We got to get it out. The true stories can help us" (p. 29). In this case the stories include remembering that, literally, we are all related, all connected, and the stories confirm it.

At the same time, Burnham (2003) notes that the context, including that of political aims, must be kept in mind, citing Robert Warrior's (1995) concern that, "the presence of traditions does not in and of itself make the future. Rather, those traditions make the future a possibility, just as they did for the people with whom the tradition originated" (p. 33). This was also the case in Berkes's (1998) example, mentioned earlier, regarding the renewal of caribou hunting in northern Quebec. The stories were used by old men to reintroduce harmony, rather than disharmony, to the hunting process deemed essential to its continued success.

As a part of this effort of restorying Dene Elder, George Blondin (1990, 1997), from the Dog Rib and Great Bear Lake regions, has spent a great deal of energy explaining and returning stories of the times when the Dene possessed medicine powers that were good for the people. He notes that these powers are hard to describe and that different people had different kinds of power (Blondin, 1982). As François Paulette (2001) explains:

> There are different kinds of Elders with different knowledge; one may know when the first snowfall will be, another may be renowned for telling stories. Some Elders know much about medicine, one may know about the healing plants, where they are found and their physical qualities. Another may know about spiritual healing. One Elder may be a skilled strategist and know how to plan and strategize. There were Elders, both men and women, who understood water or who understood fish and there were Elders that understood the treaties.

Blondin (1997) holds that in those days medicine power was what governed life and contributed to a good life for the people. For Blondin, and for some of the participants in this study, history is the narrative of interlinked medicine stories and of the people whose lives demonstrated its worth to the people. Blondin claims that in the last fifty years the stories are not told in the ongoing way they once were. He and others suggest that it is important for young people to know what their own people could do rather than simply being fascinated with current books or movies, such as the Harry Potter series, where the characters have special abilities. Frank reminds us that in the past "they all had it" to some degree, that is how people lived in interconnection with environment and each other. This system of knowledge, belief, and power served the people and the land well in times past.

But for others the discussion of medicine power, even simply in reference to the past, is offensive given their own families' background in Catholicism and in family life in the community. This knowledge system is rejected as long past, as not part of their own family's tradition of belief, as superstition, or as unacceptable given current education and religious teachings. For these community members, history is still a network of stories — stories of family and of working hard in many different ways, as Emilia Gratrix's story of her own family attests. Whatever the values held, for all participants history was storied and embodied in lived histories connected to older stories and the stories of older people. Métis Elder Elsie Yanik (LaRoque) remembers the storytelling by Elders in the community of Fitzgerald when she was little as part of the first thing taught to children, the importance of listening and respect in order to learn (Yanik, 1990). How to pass on traditional values given changing conditions of learning, knowing, and background is something that people continue to speak about. How to respect the learning needs that kids have today, while re-storying so that they know where they come from, who they are, the alternative ways of responding to situations that may guide them and that they themselves can pass on "hand down stories" is seen by Elders as important to community well-being.

Knowing Something: Knowledge, Experience, Perception, Truth

Knowledge

For the Maori, "to know" something is to locate it in space and in time, as their oral genealogical tradition illustrates (Roberts and Wills, 1998). For Euro/North Americans, the science based model for knowing something is to reduce it to its most basic form, to separate the phenomenon under study from its relationship within environment and from competing belief systems, while reconstructing patterns that indicate something is there to be seen — a valid phenomenon isolated and now understood in itself. For many Aboriginal North Americans, to know something is to place it in connection with all other beings. Knowledge occurs in the context of relationship. Knowledge comes from experience gained by watching, listening, reflecting on, and then trying, mastering, and adopting innovations that may be passed on. As Louis Beaver notes, "To know how to do it takes doing it." Knowledge about what action to take may also be found in response to dreaming, considered as valid (and sometimes more) a form of experience as waking activity. In the past, knowledge is seen to be true if the holder is mature, knows something, and is seen to live in a good way (Deloria, 1999). In the subarctic, the very success of people who are good hunters, fast runners, hard workers, able problem solvers, and who live long is indicative of their knowledge.

Psychologist Richard Nisbett, in several recent works on the influence of culture on frames of thought, finds patterns of observable difference (Cohen & Nisbett, 1996; Nisbett et al, 2001; Nisbett, 2003). However, Barth (1995) holds that we've got it wrong, simplistically wrong, when we think of culture as what makes for difference rather than what makes for knowledge. He holds that knowledge should be viewed as one of the major modalities of culture. By knowledge Barth refers to "what people employ to interpret and act on the world: feelings as well as thoughts, embodied skills as well as taxonomies and other verbal models" (p. 66). By relying on models based on how one "engages the world through action" (p. 66) a less "disempowering discourse" (p. 66) can be constructed based not just on difference (while fully acknowledging variation and its importance) but more importantly on "divergent bodies of knowledge and different ways of knowing" (p. 67) both within and between cultural groups. Culture becomes interactional or what he refers to as transitive. This emphasis then allows for "an inspection of the differing *criteria of validity* in different traditions of knowledge and the different kinds of knowledge that are *produced* by embracing these different criteria" [italics original] (p. 67). Barth suggests that "careful thinking through how different kinds of knowledge are constituted, produced, and used may provide one such way" (p. 67).

Nisbett (2003) sees this as cultural preferences for forms of knowledge organization. Aboriginal scholars often comment on the verb orientation of many Aboriginal languages as compared to European languages (Little Bear, 2000). Further, rather than many forms of nouns or pronouns as in English there is often only one form; the context informs the listener as to syntax, gender, and plurality. In a series of psychological studies, Nisbett and his colleagues found that while language makes an important difference to perception, culture is an even stronger force (Nisbett et al, 2001, Nisbett, 2003). Culture also affects the degree to which logic may or may not override a practical empiricism (Nisbett, et al, 2001), an issue in the natural resource debates discussed earlier. Nisbett describes a form of collective agency as stronger in cultures with a more holistic and context dependent sensibility rather than the individual agency of personal freedom based in the Greek tradition (Nisbett, 2003). Shweder and Bourne (1991) hold that holistic worldviews leads to actually thinking differently which has a cognitive impact.

Anthropologists and philosophers have reacted to these issues in a variety of ways. Philosopher Ian Hacking (1982) develops the concept of basically context-dependent *styles of reasoning* where "candidates for truth or falsehood have no existence separate from the reasoning that settles what it is to be true or false in their domain" (p. 49). Thus objectivity is held within reasoning or cognitive styles that have developed historically in particular contexts (Hacking, 1982, Denny, 1999). Hacking holds that translation (or common meaning) is easy when it comes to everyday utterances but hard "when one gets to whole new ranges of possibility that makes no sense for the favoured styles of reasoning of another culture" (p. 49). Understanding then comes from learning how to reason within the tenets of what makes for truth-or-falsehood in the new paradigm or context (Hacking, 1982). In this case often: "I seen it, I dreamed it, my father told me." Simple translation, without taking into account reasoning style, will fail (Hacking, 1982). "Translation" refers only to accuracy of translation rather than to understanding given the possibilities inherent in the style of reasoning, something brought up as a challenge in working with Indigenous oral traditions (Tedlock, 1983). Thus, Hacking (1982) states a preference for communication of ways of thinking rather than of translations of truth. However, while rejecting the classic form of rationalism and it's imperialist positioning in Western thought, Hacking (1982) looks for tolerance and understanding combined with the "discipline of ones own standards of truth and reason" (p. 66).

Anthropologist Richard Shweder (1986) contributes to this discussion by describing processes of rational agents operating within *divergent rationalities*. From this perspective then

> Members of a culture are members of a moral community who work to construct a shared reality and *who act as though they were parties to an agreement to behave rationally within the terms of the realities they share* [italics added]. (p. 20)

Shweder (1996) holds that the best way to explore this phenomenon is through "real time participant observation" (p.18). As he indicates:

> True ethnography confronts us with alternate worlds of value and meaning, with different universes of preference and constraint. It tests the limits of our capacity to suspend our disbelief and to access hidden, unconscious, or marginalized aspects of our own subjectivity. It draws us a picture of moral communities where peoples have different ideas about the desirable states of functioning for human beings. (p. 18)

Yet Shweder and Hacking fall short of the radical participation/experience near perspectives of ethnographers working with subarctic peoples, their focus is on the interpretation of mental meanings. This conception of mental models as frames is important. By using, as well, the input of our own developmental processes of thinking and behaving within field work experience as "lived experience," while maintaining reflexive awareness, one can begin to see. One must, without striving to replace one-self, acknowledge the legitimate impact of experience on our own development. Radical participation, such as attempted here, in many ways puts this dynamic the other way around, on the other foot so to speak. For example, it shows us not what we see as different or imagine life to be like for the other but though "integrated participation" where others are coming from and see as different or odd about us (Lave, 1991; Jackson, 1989; E. Turner, 1996).

In many ways stories are a good place to start. In this work I have used a narrative approach to presenting data as I believe it has the best chance of transmitting meanings across varying perceptual bases and biases. As Ridington (1990) reminds us:

> Documentary and narrative ethnographic forms are particularly well suited to communicating the culture and experience of egalitarian northern hunting people. Both are ways of telling stories. They connect to the stories northern native people tell of their own lives. (p. 258)

Stories serve as an essential vehicle not only for cementing relationships and transmitting knowledge, but also as repositories of response for varying social and environmental conditions. Along with dreams, stories provide alternative responses. These "open alternatives", by producing options available in changing interpersonal and environmental conditions, allows for successful response and or adaptation at low cost.

Walter Benjamin (1968) discusses the role of storying in maintaining knowledge traditions. He describes the impact of information as short term and always replaceable by new information. Narrative, in comparison, may live on as held in concentrated form in story, releasing its strength when needed in future times. The story may have value not only "when the world was new," as Blondin references in a traditional manner (Blondin, 1990), but also when needed. This continuity is an important aspect of understanding the current interest in recording of traditional oral stories (Cruikshank, 1999). Orality takes immersion in story, context, practice, and requires skill development (Eastman, 1972). By orality (Ong, 1982) or oral literacy I refer to the development of the skills required to attend to, remember, integrate, make use of, and share oral traditions of knowledge. Sources for this knowledge may include old time stories, stories of cultural heroes, traditional knowledge and knowledge systems along with oral history of known people, specific events, experiences, and their context. For example, when older men tell me what was told to them about the hunting activities of their fathers or grandfathers, they tell it with what I experienced as almost word to word consistency with what they were told sixty or seventy years earlier. Not only content but dialogues, specific pieces of information, and even figures are remembered within a storied framework as presented by older men like Louis Beaver and older women like Maryanne MacDonald.

My education and its learning system have taught me not to emphasize remembering but instead to become skilled at finding the location or containers of bits of stored information. For example, when my son, at age seven, wanted to learn how to play baseball he asked if we could go and get a library book on baseball rather than start with observation and participation. For Western cultures technology is used to contain increasing amounts of information. However, as Robin Ridington points out, for the Dene or Beaver of northern British Columbia, technology is held in the mind (Ridington, 1982). They know how to do things in the environment with the materials at hand that were/are located in the bush, in both experience and story. In the Western experience our ability to hold open alternatives in the mind, in memory, seems to have been minimized as we adopted and expanded our potential for culturally spread textual literacy, then itself spread and reified through cultural processes. Given, what to me is the phenomenal ability of Louis Beaver and others, I hold however that one strategy does not necessarily supercede the other in sophistication. Rather they are both examples of how our cognitive capacities have allowed us to develop communication mechanisms that allow for storage, retrieval, and sharing of complex material needed within systems of meaning when knowledge of the alternatives is needed and as made available through our culturally embedded reasoning and meaning-making processes.

In the Western tradition apprenticeship learning comes closest to the forms of learning reported by participants in this study. Lave (1990) holds that
social practice theory argues that knowledge-in-practice, constituted in the settings of practice, based on rich expectations generated over time about its shape, is the site of the most powerful knowledgeability of people in the lived-in world (p.323). Dewey held that knowing is not simply something that goes on in our heads, but involves active interaction with environment, and, further, that experience is in nature and nature is in experience (Dewey, 1960). Experience is transmitted not just by introspection but more importantly "by activity in relation with the world" (Lave, p. 310). Thus everyday practices occur within and both embody and structure located views of place, behavior, and meaning (Ortner, 1984). Knowing then is related to the relational learning of skilled identities and roles within communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). To understand these processes Western academics need to unpack the assumption of rational, logical, and scientific forms of thinking as superior and acknowledge culturally and historically situated ways of thinking, forms of knowledge, and intellectual traditions (Lave, 1996).

Lave describes apprentices as observing and experimenting within an interconnected cognitive and social world until they achieve a first approximation: then they practice. Apprentices can see what is being done and then they assist in increasingly central ways as Maryanne describes in her account. Similarly, Mrs. McNeil, Mary Heron's mother, said:

> I remember when I was young, my mother cut out moccasins for me. And she said to me "You make a pair of moccasins." I said all right. I made one side.

> When she comes back I told her "I sewed one." She looked at it; she cut it [where I had sewed]. "Do it again all over. I hope you don't do it the way you did this one!" So I had to do it all over again. That's the way they used to teach the kids, you see. The next time I make a good one. (Laraque, 1985, p.53)

However, learning does not occur just in practice, it occurs in the contextual nature of the society. For example, in the following illustration, Francois King Beaulieu reacts to the interviewer's question about learning language with a totally different understanding of what is being said than the interviewer holds.

> Sandra: When were you taught to speak English?
>
> Francois: No I wasn't taught. English, Cree, and French were all spoken around me. (Dolan, 1993)

For Francois the word "taught" implies formal teaching in the Western institutional sense, rather than learning-in- practice (Lave, 1990) in the context of his relationships and activities with his father, Paul King Beaulieu, and his older brothers, Alexis and Tsi Pierre Beaulieu. To Louis and Maryanne knowledge is verb-like: it is something you can use, you can work with. It is not contained anywhere except in storied experience acted on to create more experience. It is thought on but then the action confirms it.

Many people mentioned how they loved to listen, listen to the old people. Louise Fraser (Mercredi) told me, "I *loved* to listen. I always came right over and sat down when I heard Elders start to tell stories." Frank Laviolette mentions the same enjoyment in listening and Louis notes how it could help you later on. With no radio or television Maria Brown (2000) tells how they listened to stories:

> We children would go to old peoples' houses at night and lay down by the fire on caribou skins on the floor and listen to stories. It felt so nice, pretty soon we would be getting sleepy. In the morning our mothers would be looking for us. She knew we were in a good place and then we'd have porridge and bannock for breakfast.

Many community member mention the importance of spending time in the evening with Elders as an important aspect of the learning process. Spending time in the tent talking after the days work was done, as Frank Laviolette experienced, was an enjoyable and important aspect of a young boy's learning and as Toni Heron recalls, by sleeping with her grandmother as a child she heard and remembers many stories.

Our experience and the value we place on oral knowledge is influenced by our perceptions. As Angela Wilson Cavendish (1998) points out, historical perception or consciousness, is shaped by particular societies. In the expereince of Aboriginal peoples perception has been shaped by the oral tradition. Speaking of the Dakota, Wilson (2000) reminds us that "oral tradition has been the primary means through which our historical consciousness has been constructed and a deeply rooted investment in the past created" (Wilson, 2000, p.25). However, for many years orality was perceived by Western institutions of knowledge as less than literate forms, or as interesting primarily in preserving myth. Couture (1978), Wilson (1998, 2000), McLeod (2000), L. Ruttan (2004c), and Stevenson (1998) note the essential nature of the oral traditon of history to a more authentic picture of "Indian history." To Elders like Mary Heron, who continue to work in a variety of ways to transmit narrative and language, recontextualizing the stories is also important as a responsibility which, as she is well aware of, has educational, social, and political implications.

Perception

In discussing differing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perceptions of the world around us, noted author and Kiowa scholar, N. Scott Momaday (1997), reminds us of the age-old philosophical problem regarding the distinction between "the thing in itself" and "the thing experienced." In the Western scientific tradition we emphasize "the thing in itself" which we "know" through empirical processes. In Aboriginal traditions of knowing the emphasis is on "the thing experienced." As an illustration, Momaday (1997) imagines his daughter asking him: "Where does the sun live?" Given his experience in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal traditions of thought, he immediately realizes there are two answers. One is "Of course, the sun lives in the sky separate from the earth, the earth orbits around the sun and dear, the sun doesn't really *live* anywhere." The other is, "The sun *lives* in the earth." [italics added] (p.51). From this perspective the sun is alive. Every morning we watch as it emerges from its home in the earth and we *know* this with a spiritual sense that is profound. Momaday (1997) refers to the experience of the Navajo but this differing sense of life and knowing is just as apparent to many of the Métis and Dene people of northern Canada. Our worldview impacts what we perceive and how we perceive it.

Perception as a psychological phenomenon is said to involve mental causation based on how we relate what we experience with the mental models we already possess (Kim, 1998). It is cumulative, it may change, but psychological perception or the interpretation of that perception is screened by culturally based models of understanding that serve as everyday shortcuts for us. This is illustrated in the accounts of Western writers including the Godsells who could only see primitiveness in knowledge holders like John James Daniels and the accounts of government officials who could only see the problem of the commons in unregulated hunting and trapping institutions rather than the reasoning in long-standing common property institutions, norms, and practices. Perception is further complicated by the use of models that justify the domination of others, whether consciously or not, as “helping” or “educating” by “reparenting” in our own models of perception and knowledge through processes that have been termed “cognitive imperialism” (Battiste, 2000b, p. 125).

Standpoint theory acknowledges the double perception or double consciousness held by many of those who attempt to cope with this situation along with the failure to see by majority groups (Du Bois, 1903; D. Smith, 1974). The meanings that we make of perception and experience and the matters that we attend to increases awareness of how, not only on an individual basis but also on a cultural basis, we view and represent what we experience. As Atkins (2000) notes, each person’s take on experience involves individual perception but is situated socially, historically, and intersubjectivly.

The nature of dreams as experiences to be learned from or acted upon, as mediums for the transmission of knowledge and information (Barth, 2002) rather than as merely interesting or puzzling phenomenon is a good example. Dreams may be sited in place. Hacking (2002) holds that “a great many aspects of dreams will be peculiar to the society in which the dreamer dreams, tells the dream, acts out the dream, behaves in light of the dream, and incorporates the dream into waking light or excludes it" (p. 228). Frank Laviolette and Arthur Beaulieu note not only the importance of dreams in their own life but in lives of the people they learned from, as illustrated in the experience of Paul King's trance-like dream which leads to seven heads or seven moose. Raymond Beaver recalls when working as a trapper, "When I dream of a woman across the lake and I get across to her I know I will have a good season and get many beaver." And others mention that experiences or teachings were recognized "because he already dreamed it." These experiences are seen as more than subjective explication of feelings but rather messages for thought and action, or as having meanings that will become evident in time (Ridington, 1988; D.M. Smith, 2002; Goulet, 1998; Sharp, 2001). Not all dreams are understood this way but some are. Perception of dreams, experiences, and consequences as related to their meaning is based in culturally rooted ideas of not only what perceptions are real but also in their "moral perception" (Blum, 1994) of what these experiences can mean for one's behavior in relation to self and others, including non-human others.

The truth was in it

Moilanen (2000) notes that despite the inherent challenges in evaluation, "truth is the most important notion of science" (p. 378). In the conduct of research "a truthful conception of reality" (p. 378) is seen as equally important to both qualitative and quantitative research (Moilanen, 2000). While acknowledging that many social facts are often interpreted in differing fashions in differing societies, Moilanen calls for the use of subjective and objective processes in the interpretation of these social practices which are nevertheless aspects of a larger cultural interpretation (Moilanen, 2000). Given that the aim of social science research is to "reconstruct the interpretations made by the members of societies investigated" (p.377), Moilanen holds that the coherence theory of truth (coherence between a claimed proposition and a specified set of propositions) is a good match for qualitative research. He describes coherence as related to the congruence of action and interpretations of reasons for actions which must be maintained if one is to hold a coherent perception of reality. Moilanen, however, holds on to the value of the correspondence theory of truth (truth is correspondent to objective features of the world) as important by pushing us to think further in the development of research questions and interpretations and for reflecting on ontological issues of reason and action (Moilanen, 2000).

The issue of coherence of behavior and values, especially as considered proof of truth, is often one that causes people to fail to see or to understand other worldviews. We think through the mechanisms and understandings of our own culture in ways that screen what seems truthful or coherent (Shweder, 1991). The confusion and the changes in perception experienced in interacting within cultural contexts other than our own may affect our sense of coherence, often causing a stressful cognitive dissonance (i.e. culture shock). If we remember English adventurer Warburton Pikes' (1892/1917) racist comments about the ways Indians and particularly the Beaulieu's think (see p.16), we may recognize variation in perceptions of reality, in strategies of looking at the world, in the social rules for doing so, and the systems of knowledge in which we base those actions; however, given the context of colonial power, the racism and its potential impact remains. For example, Seton (1911) and Mair's (1908/1999) later derogatory comments on various Beaulieus (Chapter 4) based on their reading of Pike's (1892/1999) earlier comments are all still in print. While within their own community the Beaulieu's may have simply dismissed Pike as an example of an obnoxious stranger, it seems that Joseph would have liked Mair and the Treaty 8 party to believe him. His response when they did not was to refuse Treaty and take scrip, maintaining himself as a "free man," not dependent on people who don't respect you. The refusal of many community women to work for white women, including Jean Godsell, represents a similar response to these dynamics. Her truths were not their own and they rejected Jean's assumption of inherent power in her conception of located reality.

Given the historical material presented in the interviews and the textual analysis in Chapters Three and Four, what makes for truth is an essential aspect of ownership of history which continues to have power to define, construct, and control. The nature of truth then is important. This was particularly evident in the strongly held positions by both Aboriginal traditional knowledge holders and wildlife managers and game wardens. Yet what is clear is that the nature of truth can be based in equally valid (in context) but differing conceptions of how truth is located, transmitted, confirmed, and acted upon. This is illustrated in the following attempt by Raymond Beaver 7/2003) to explain these issues to a government bureaucrat during a visit in my kitchen in Ft. Smith. He describes the development of listening skills in children.

> They are told to listen, and not only hear but also gestures are used for communicating how to do something. An Elder may also show you by gestures that this is the way it was done and you remember exactly how it was shown to you. They learn this skill from the Elder and as they grow they can see its important, like for survival, if they don't do it they may get hurt. You are taught to hear and remember but you know the difference when someone is telling a story that is more for fun, they laugh plus you know from listening to other stories about the subject. When they told stories you could tell all the details and *the truth was in it*. There is no reason to lie, why would they? They are telling it to benefit others. When they are telling someone else's story, it is exact, no words are added, the right words are used.

Going on Raymond explores the nature and context of truth or falsehood:

> You have to remember that for Aboriginal people there is no such thing as a yes or no answer. The answer always has *a story behind it*. If we said, "How did this happen?" they would relate to you *exactly* how it happened. You can not qualify the answers, you have to answer exactly. If you have to answer yes or no they are not getting the truth from you. The justice system, the government tries to hurry you up, but I have to think of how to explain it if it is to be the truth. For example, this becomes a problem within the justice system, the police or lawyer is asking, "Did you see so and so doing this?" that is putting words in their mouth. It's not exactly your own thought or your own knowledge, what you seen. If it's my story, that is exactly what I meant. Why would someone want to question me until I put in their own view as correct? It is supposed to be your truth not theirs.

Repeatedly reports by Indian Agents, priests, government bureaucrats, and wildlife managers complain about the lengthy orations presented in meetings and the constant repetition of narratives in other settings. Efforts by Aboriginal people to communicate the truth that was *in it* are perceived by many non-Aboriginals as boring, whining, and repetitive rambles that never got to the point while their own failure to get what they have been presented with is considered a pitiful inability or unwillingness to learn.

Raymond also adds that the point is that the stories were told to you so that they could be passed on. By knowing that their parents and other older people wouldn't lie to them, as Louis Beaver and Maryanne McDonald note, provides the context for dealing with white people, who did lie at times, and gives us the context for understanding their reaction to this behavior. This is especially the case given that local knowledge systems were not only misunderstood but also questioned and ridiculed as primitive or superstitious. It also contextualizes the discussion of strategies of response which then were perceived for example, by some RCMP constables, as "they all lie."

What is important here is that *there is always a story behind it* (truth) and that the truth was *in it* (story). The details are as important as any point to be made, the listeners can see it's useful to know what is being said, and the truth could be found in the story and in the details of the story as expressed in the words that were chosen. Concern about whether someone was telling the truth was rare until recent years. Louis, Maryanne, Frank, and Arthur all stressed that the people they learned from, "they don't tell lies." People generally addressed what they knew and with good intention (Johnston, 1999). And as Raymond notes, if they were joking you could tell. As Momaday (1997) has indicated in regards to the North American oral tradition, "stories were told to be believed … stories are realities lived and believed. They are true." (p. 3)

From this oral experience words were not cheap, there were not pages and pages of words to play with, and, again, the right words were used (Momaday, 1997). This means they think carefully about what words to use, speaking slowly in order to think about what they are saying and to use the words that are right. Louis Beaver told me that using a tape recorder made him speak too quickly and then he can't be sure he is using the right words. Words make an experience into truth/knowledge that can be passed on to others to help them in life. Thus local people had their own understanding of place, of the changes occurring, and of the people involved based in their own values and experience. As Frank Laviolette indicated in talking about fur trade history

"I know some been written about it, but that way we never use, how they got the story is hand down." Arthur also remarks on the oral system of knowledge transmission: "Them days there was nothing written. It's by a story I heard things." In Chipewyan and Cree knowledge systems, the first-hand knowledge of experience is privileged and second-hand knowledge only used as qualified by the closeness of the relationship to the source (e.g. my father) or the reputation of the teller (Chief Squirrel). As Guedon (2000) notes, "They trust their own concrete experiences much more than any theoretical or symbolic system" (p.32).

Contextual environments

Without the validation of direct witnesses Frank Laviolette was careful to use local forms of what Barth (2002) refers to as "the criteria of validity that governs knowledge in any particular tradition" (p. 3), for example "they claim" rather than "I know" or "according to Boniface Boucher history." Telling the truth was also important to Francois King Beaulieu, he qualifies second-hand knowledge by indicating "It wasn't in front of me though" (Dolan, 1993). Louis and Maryanne referred to having been shown or told or their fathers as having seen something as validation. Emilia referred to the credibility of the speaker, for example her grandfather Pierre Mercredi, a high status Métis. Original sources then are held in first-hand experience and relationship, not in text and the experience of reading about. Thus truth is coherent with the contextual propositions of experience, in thinking about experience, in relationship, and in passing on storied truths where background is high-lighted, often by its inference to the context of other stories. As Basil Johnson (1999) notes, children learn that words take on "different shades of meaning in different contexts" (p.46) and will understand the word, nonverbal gesture, or unspoken reference through a growing perception of context (Beaver, 7/2003; Couture, 1978; Johnston, 1999). They learn validation is related to who told them something, where they saw it, and how it fits in. In many ways I have tried to do the same in the learning for and writing of this text.

This system of knowledge is based within a holistic and highly contextualized cultural framework. In a model developed by anthropologist Edward Hall (1959), high-context cultures are noted to prefer language that allows for the maintenance of harmony while expecting others to get the unsaid message through reference to tradition, story, situation, and relationship (Adler & Towne, 1993). Most of the information and clues to its interpretation are “either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message” (Hall, 1959/1976, p. 79). Non-verbal behavior, the history of the issue, of the people involved, and the social rules of the community all influence the message without necessitating blunt statements. This also allows the individual, even a child, the autonomy to choose their own course. Necessary to this interaction system is awareness of the total environmental background/context. One can not simply focus on the key actors, statements that make points clearly, or rely on an emphasis on self expression all common to low context communication styles (Adler & Towne, 1993). Thus in Aboriginal story the background and the interconnection of all aspects are highlighted as is the way the story is being told in comparison to other ways it may be told, while in the Western story there is a center of attention on the person, the plot, the specific action. This means that narrative itself is found within a contextual/cultural style, in which the context is as important as what is usually seen as the story or the plot.

Reality for those who hold a contextualist approach, is a latticework of interconnection and cultural associations where “knowledge is intimately linked to and created by the social, conversational, or environmental context in which the events under consideration take place” (Weems, 1999, p. 132). Cultural contexts of learning reinforce the importance of contextualizing environment. For example, to be a successful hunter you can’t get a moose in the bush simply by seeing the animal, you must be aware of the age of tooth markings on a willow twig and the degree of wind or stillness. This contextualization of multiple backgrounds is why Magloire encouraged Louis to walk on the edge of the prairie and the bush. It is also in the contextualization of one’s relationship to animals that the calm, organized, and clean approach to butchering a moose is stressed by Mary Heron’s grandparents. The cultural contextualization of “truth” frequently leads to resentment particularly in systems of power; in this community frequently in relation to natural resource knowledge. For example:

> The subject came up, he [biologist] was talking about weighing and measuring everything. I said "Maybe you should check the bones, we know the caribou in the fall has thicker bones than in the spring time." We know it because of the amount of marrow which we eat. Just on observation, from eating marrow and when we use the marrow bone for a fleshing bone or something like that.
>
> So called scientists, no matter if there's a thousand years of knowledge as far as natives go, Western science says we don't believe you. He didn't know this, so he had to go and measure it; in the fall, then in the spring. Then he says, "You guys were right." He's got to check it out, weigh it, and measure it before he says, you're right. But we knew that all along. Stuff like that . . . sometimes you kind of wonder about these guys, they think they know everything but they don't. This is just something you see all the time, you observe it.

While Cree speakers like Louis Beaver or Arthur Beaulieu may refer to time by reference to "in my time" or "in their time," time is seen as interconnected as the stories and their usefulness not only in times past shows. Similarly, as Sharp (1997) points out for the Chipewyan, "History is not past history, history is: future is not may be, future is; both are equally real" (Sharp, 1997 p.97). When a particular time is given context helps clarify what is being spoken of. Given this contextual grounding, trying to keep straight which person is being referred to as Suze Kye, Susie King, Susie Marie (Susie or variant is the local form of Joseph based on the French pronunciation) is simply related to the context of the relationships and activities in the story and very slight variation in the pronunciation of the name. As Weems (1999) points out, contextual approaches are found within particular traditions of knowledge that have their own understandable "patterns of reality" as does any other worldview. Perceptions of experience are best understood from with this contextualized understanding of the life world and of appropriate social behavior in response. This makes the whole system, as culturally transmitted, adaptive within the context of conceptual development. The reality of political colonization then raises the issue of cognitive imperialism raised by Marie Battiste (2000b) in terms of education.

This focus on interconnectedness is ecological, in our current Western conceptualization of the term. However, from within the Western perspective, the emphasis on causality serves to focus the range of our perceptions of possible attributes of environment. We often interpret the received knowledge of Aboriginal peoples as mystical thereby placing it in a category with a history of our own making. We fail to see the issues of empiricism and truth inherent in the people's own understandings of their experience. As well, men like Pierre Squirrel and women like Eleanor Jeremie found their own balance of spirit, nature, and institutions of religion based in their own culture and perception and their own reflection on the ideas of others from outside. They found their own way to integrate belief and practice without undermining their sense of reality and self.

As Gregory Cajete (2004) notes, one of the challenges in applying Western models to Aboriginal epistemologies is the nature of experience, as seen as individual knowledge rather than the "we" of shared lifeworld. The base of knowledge one can apply to practice and to thought is found in the accumulation of the experiences of others that one is connected to and respects. Once again, we note Louis' reliance on the knowledge of his father, Frank's on the older men he traveled with, and Maryanne and Mary's learning from their old aunts as an essential aspect of gaining knowledge. Any reliance on theories of ecological contextualization has to remember that in this case the context usually starts with "we" rather than "I." That does not dismiss the individual experience of learning; for subarctic peoples the autonomy of self is essential to the well-being of the group. Autonomy allows for variation and respects the need to respond to the changes that are a cyclical part of life in environment. As Raymond Beaver describes, he held all the models for trap-sets he'd ever seen or heard about in his mind but he still experimented with his own ideas, while his young son observed him doing so. Knowledge is thus progressive yet has roots in continuity. Autonomy in connecting experience to the contextualized tradition of knowledge is important. What is not acceptable is for me to tell you that my way is better; I may show you how I do something but not decide for you. Yet through processes of observation and experiential learning, what works well was incorporated into the process of a continuous and responsive collective knowledge tradition.

How we see history is based on our values and the narratives we have been told and tell to illustrate those values. For Aboriginal peoples in Ft. Smith, history has been based in life on the land, in family history, in interconnection with others, and in the stories of people who held great knowledge and experience. For example, for Pierre Mercredi, Paul King Beaulieu, Pierre Squirrel, and Eleanor Jeremie the emphasis they placed depended on their particular background as Métis or Indian, as living primarily in the town or in the bush. Yet the strategies they used allowed them sufficient skills and knowledge of alternatives for their grandchildren, Emilia, Arthur, and Mary to move within identities and from one vocation to another while retaining knowledge of who they were. After their time, the competition for the nature and definition of truth, experience, and identity was heightened in schools, in regulation, and in policy as implemented by Canadian government systems making the challenge of maintaining the context of place harder for succeeding generations.

In Shutes' (1997) work in Greece, the traditional rural values and practices of Greek farmers are increasingly influenced by the choices dictated by belonging to the European Union. As a result, policies and processes are developed under conditions and priorities not of their own making, not representative of their own cultural value systems, and often not ecologically suitable for their particular micro-environments. Greek farmers have developed strategies and trade-offs in response. In order to maintain traditional practices of dowry and land inheritance these Greek farmers seem to operate under two sets of values. Shutes (1997) terms their *traditional* or parochial group-centred value system which emphasizes helping others. At the same time they are also cognizant of the need to be responsive to the *cosmopolitan* social rules of Europe as a whole which emphasize individualism and smart decision-making based purely on economics. Their decisions may represent either one of these strategies in differing market and social conditions. A similar process is at work in communities like Ft. Smith as people seek to maintain the values of traditional knowledge and social behavior in light of the need to find employment in settings which emphasize individualism and modernity. How such a system operates and how younger community members negotiate these processes in light of an increasing desire to re-story Aboriginal identity while working with systems of learning, knowledge, and employment which hold Western value systems will be of interest in future research. Fred Dawson who grew up in Salt River explains his concerns that it may be too late:

> In the past, ancient peoples worked very hard. That is why, since all of our Elders have died, and myself, I was a child then, so all of the stories I tell, I couldn't have known. It's because adults told me those stories that I know the stories and learned from them. That is why if you are told about how things are and may be someone hears that, he may say, what does he know that he is telling us all those stories about the past. They may say that about me, right? Some say that. (Dolan, 1993).

If re-storying is to occur, Elders' concerns that in today's context they won't be believed needs to be recognized. At the same time, modern development has emphasized value systems that are experienced by local people as oppositional to the maintenance of traditional values. Starting with Elders and discussing issues of context as they see them and want to approach them, given the differing experiences and perceptions of their grandchildren, is important.

Summary of the Study

The objective of this study was *to understand the process whereby Aboriginal Elders in the community of Ft. Smith have engaged in exploring and responding to historical events*. Research questions included the following:

1. How do community perspectives on history compare with Western perspectives?
2. What is the process of interpretation used by the Elders?
3. What impact did their interpretation have on the strategies used to interact with people, programs and policies within and beyond the community?

To answer these questions I used a narrative and contextual approach to illustrate the data. Data included the perspectives of six Elders, each interviewed several times, other information/learning based on participant observation, interviews and conversations with advisors, friends, and other Elders, together with the use of secondary data in the form of older interview material. The research used an ethnographic and narrative approach to methodology and data analysis. A narrative approach was used to highlight the storied nature of the material within the knowledge traditions and systems of meaning of the people involved. The published accounts of explorers, travelers, traders, and government officials were reviewed in an attempt to look at comparative perspectives regarding history, experience, and knowledge. These texts were also narratives. However, they were narratives based in a very different sense of location and of what values were appropriate to negotiate relationships of order, control, and systems of knowledge in this place and with who lived there. Thus texts as based in time and culture were reviewed through the medium of narrative while holding on to the sociopolitical contexts of experience.

Major findings

Responses to the research question were based in personal and cultural values. Asked to share perceptions of history many of the participants told history in the way they learned it themselves — in the form of story — story about relationships, about the land, and about knowledge and the people who were respected as knowledge holders. Summarized findings include:

1. Everybody is connected to everybody and the stories reveal it.
2. Observational, relational, and storied patterns of knowledge transmission were predominant.
3. The yearly cycle of life on the land is history. The relationships we had were history. The knowledge we had was history. The way we lived is who we were, what we remember. All combine into stories of historical importance.
4. Aboriginal knowledge systems are held in a long tradition that worked effectively. This knowledge system is highly contextual and context dependent. It includes forms of knowing that are based on empirical observation, in practicing relational learning, and in received knowledge that may be considered subjective and/or metaphysical from Western viewpoints.

Knowledge is understood from within, relationship, practice, experience, and worldview.

5. The stories that are told aren't told for one purpose, they are told so you can pass them on. The Elders tell them for their own reasons and once told you have a responsibility to pass them on. Elders see when you are ready to learn.
6. History is based in a context where autonomy, as an individual and mutual responsibility for collective well-being are both valued. Men, women, and children as equal to anyone else are important values. A high regard for individual autonomy while also respectful of relational responsibilities is important to the success, growth, and transmission of knowledge systems.
7. Responsibility for ones choices and to assist others and how that was carried out is an aspect of historical identity. These values influenced relationships with the Euro-Canadians who came north who often misunderstood or did not respect both the degree of autonomy northern individuals possessed, the systemic dependence on truth telling, and relationship with knowledge holders while also locating self within a collective set of reciprocal relationships. Western institutions attempted to undermine these value systems in light of social norms and views on development and futures within Western society.
8. Respect for animals and their autonomy was/is equally important to that of humans given their linked system of relations within environment and knowledge systems. The, as perceived, disrespectful treatment of animals and hunters, especially by scientists and game managers, led to more resentment and resistance than any other factor.
9. The textual accounts reviewed show a highly attitudinal form of what makes for knowledge, appropriate behavior, and of possible futures within the Western traditions of exploration, science, progress, and development. They are also contextual in that they are based in attitudes of the time. However, experiences in the north, in the context of colonial processes, appear in some cases to harden these attitudes.
10. Forms of validation of knowledge and information in the Aboriginal accounts are usually based in personal first hand experience, in relationship, and in the

closeness to or reputation of second-hand sources and are very important to the teller. Disrespect for the old men and women who held knowledge and/or who "knew something" and who always told the truth was also a source of resentment towards white people and institutions.

11. Personal and collective agency was maintained through preferred social rules which could be modified under changing conditions. The impact of Western economic, social, and legal systems restricted the range of alternatives available and influenced the development of strategies of response in order to maintain way of life and freedom of choice as far as possible.
12. An emphasis on resisting the Western discourses about this community in the form of, "we weren't pitiful, we knew in powerful ways, we had great leaders, and we took care of ourselves well" was stressed by older people and is represented in the dialogues of older people.
13. For the Elders interviewed time is based in a temporal system of relating history to "in their time" or "in my time," yet past, present, and future are often not seen as an ongoing progressive entity but are experienced as inseparable phenomenon.
14. As illustrated, the minimizing of traditional Aboriginal ways of knowing and knowledge systems has had highly political implications, in terms of allocation of scarce resources and government control and "assistance." This history continues to haunt the discussion about and the delivery of current government programs including natural resource, health, justice, education, and social services.
15. The impact of government defined legal identities, institutions of governance, and variable access to land and resources has had and continues to have a divisive effect on local Métis and First Nations people who are all related and whose grandparents considered themselves "all one people."
16. Relational, environmental, and historical processes have interacted in ways that serve to both maintain and constrain the variation and autonomy needed for resilient social systems.

17. Elders hope that reconnecting interconnected stories may help young people know more about who they are, increase their respect for traditional values, and carry them into positive futures.

History, then, is based in value systems and experience as understood from within traditional knowledge systems. Historical perception is based in experience as understood from the perspective of individuals within culture and worldview and while dealing with changing circumstances. As with stories that held truth, historical perception for the Aboriginal Elders interviewed in this research, "is *in* it": in story, experience, context, and relationship. A genealogy of historical perception of experience has been presented leading to the conclusion that "there is always a story behind it" and that these stories and the contextual way they relate human and environment are important to future and to strategies for success in futures.

Findings that I found more significant than I had anticipated include that there was 1). such a high degree of interconnection between families in terms of relationship and interconnected storied history, 2). that medicine stories were given to me as history, and that the role of this form of knowledge was important for understanding perceptions of history while also acknowledging the strong feelings of those in the community who reject this knowledge tradition, 3). the strength of the role of the two settlements of Salt River and Ft. Fitzgerald, 4). the degree to which the multiple assaults of government regulation, particularly related to hunting, trapping (ways of making a living and sustaining lifestyle) and Wood Buffalo National Park influenced the community and the choices available to people, eventually influencing their resilience, and 5) the emphasis on truth telling and the emotions that raised in the context of white people who were seen as not always truthful yet who frequently did not believe them.

History, as a body of knowledge verified by experts, can be used as a structure to deny or minimize human agency (Ulin, 2001). The textual material referenced in Chapter Four provides plenty of evidence that this is so. Yet the storied form of as-lived-history presented and illustrated in this study indicates that maintaining one's own history is an important aspect of resilience and holds opportunity for community futures. History, as seen by older people in this community is bound not only in their own experience but in the narratives told by their grandparents and other Elders in their time. It is based within their own values and worldview as perceived through experience and reflection. This means that it is highly contextual; background is as important as anything else and includes relationships of respect to Elders, animals, and the land. Knowledge of history is based in the land and in the knowledge of those who lived on and with that land. However, stories of experience in relating and negotiating with Western systems of trade, employment as brigade and freighters, and later as subjects of government are also an important aspect of this history; this is reflected through the actual experience of community members and family.

Experience cycles through the stock of knowledge perpetuating a developing body of knowledge. The knowledge presented to the researcher in this study is traditional in the ways it was learned, the ways it was told and retold, and in its basis in the ongoing interaction of worldview and environment. Historical perception originates in culturally based models for understanding experience within community with reference to events, people, environment, and relationships that interact with worldview. Historical perceptions are responded to with agency and through strategies that relate moral perceptions of best behavior to economic, social, and political realities as experienced and passed on within systems of practice and knowledge and as expressed in context and story.

In summary then:

1. History is the story of those who "know." Historical perception is culturally based.
2. What makes for truth, experienced in the context of environment varies between worldviews. Differences in knowledge systems and the values associated with them are the site of the strongest conflict. This issue continues to influence community-wide relationships and institutions.
3. The community operates, in many ways, in parallel universes inhabiting the same physical space but not the same (as perceived) physical, cultural, or assumptional space.

4. Agency continued throughout the change processes of the last century and continues to do so despite the reality of the multiple impacts of colonial processes.
5. Interconnected stories sustained peoples' relationships. They know through story that all their stories (families) are interconnected. Stories connect land, family, and spirituality with knowledge systems in a manner that promotes resilience.
6. Elders hope that re-storying may bring back historical background and values to younger community members in a manner that aids in envisioning futures.

Contributions

I found that the way these narratives were told was in itself an essential aspect of the answer to the research question; this is a contribution in itself. Other contributions include methodological innovations in the presentation and analysis of the narrative material, in portraying unrepresented views of history in a contextual fashion, and in the use of the key terms of historical perception, experience, and strategic choice. The data gathered and methods used in this study will make significant contributions to the field of subarctic ethnography. The material presented to me by community Elders is rich. It should make valuable contributions to the understanding of traditional knowledge systems and learning processes and on the impact of twentieth century socio-political processes on these systems. Educational materials and community heritage projects can be developed from this material. Future research with the community to explore this same issue with middle-aged and young adults would be useful to explore maintenance and/or drift in the values and perspectives shared in this study. Developmental factors that influence perception should be considered. Exploration of the findings of this research in comparison to other similar communities may add to the elucidation of the Aboriginal experience in western Canada. Acknowledgement of that history and these stories may contribute towards revising narratives of experience and futures, as understood by the larger Canadian public. The relationships fostered in the process of this research are also an aspect of the outcome. While three of these Elders have now passed on, the others remind me that we have only just begun our work together. There is much more to do.

Is re-storying possible?

I have told stories and stories, not only to respect the people's ability to tell their own history, but also to illustrate the interconnection of lives as perceived or understood from within experience and culture. Doing so respects the contextual knowledge base where the truth is *in* it, in the stories and in their details and interconnections. When I began this research I used Western methods to know place. I didn't start my knowing from the people and places that held that knowledge. Now I am making the connections, I can travel across the land in my mind, see the routes and stories that connect the families and link them together in many ways and I am beginning to understand the logic of the system of knowledge used to do so. I am beginning to see that while people will not push you to learn, when they see when are ready to do so they will support that learning often by showing through example and then providing opportunities to learn by doing.

I have tried to proceed by acting within the following principles, As Raymond Beaver noted, "The one going to be interviewed is the one who should control where the interview is going. This is history then, right from the Elder's words." At the same time I have tried, as Francois Paulette advised early on, "to keep my feet on the ground." Given that in many ways I embodied the research issues, this proved very difficult, nevertheless this advice reminded me to take care of myself during the process in the best way I knew how. I also learned from Eileen Lines as she struggled to regain pride in her own history that in many ways had been silenced though her early schooling in Ft. Smith. She chose to proceed by re-schooling and re-envisioning futures though University studies in Education and Native Studies and awakened pride in identity as an Aboriginal woman and mother.

History occurs in the repeated patterns and relationships involved in the context of knowledge required for making a living. Re-storying under the guidance of Elders is important for the resilient continuation of knowledge traditions, and the varying strategies encompassed within them. Some say that "for every story they tell (in school) we lose one of ours." Loss of autonomy in terms of self-determination occurred one story after another, however many people believe self-determination can be and is being rebuilt through this tradition as well. Many Aboriginal writers, including Ft. Smith's own literary son, Richard Van Camp, believe that relationships with future may be built through a process of mutual storytelling, in an attempt to "braid our words and stories with the written word" (Nicosia, 2004, p. 1). Aboriginal northerners — Métis, Chipewyan, and Cree people — have been telling the non-Aboriginal people who went north stories all along, but we haven't listened or really understood. In this oral tradition the meanings of stories are not usually explained. In Western school systems we learn that the point is usually fairly obvious if one follows the plot as presented within our own traditions of narrative. Listening, in the context of contemporary northern relationships, means negotiating this disjuncture. This process is already occurring as I was reminded last summer. Here is one more story:

"How ignorant can they get," I thought, when I heard that the town office had announced the theme for this year's Canada Day parade. The theme was "The Slave River Explorers." To me this meant the floats were expected to celebrate Hearne, Mackenzie, Franklin, Back, and the others; the history found in the texts which had ignored the ancestors of the people now building the floats. I should have known better — this was a good learning for me — when the floats came down the main road nary a mention of Mackenzie or Franklin was to be seen. Instead people were dressed as their relatives, as the York boat men, and within the lifestyle of the time.

Afterword

During the process of completing this dissertation, three of the Elders involved passed away: Frank Laviolette, Emilia Gratrix, and Arthur Beaulieu. Frank's ready knowledge of community history: names, experiences, and, importantly, stories is often missed. At a memorial for Emilia, George Kurszewski spoke about how important Emilia's Métis identity was for her and how she had helped him as a young leader. The section on Arthur from this dissertation was used as background in preparing his eulogy. During one of Arthur's last nights, I sat with him in the hospital and he talked again about what was important to him: living the right way by sharing, not bragging about what you could do, and his family's knowledge of plant medicines. Louis Beaver now stays at the Northern Lights Personal Care Home. He uses oxygen part of each day, plays cribbage with another resident, and gets out to his sister Maggie's for some good food once in a while. He has more to tell and wants to continue working together, but he is sometimes frustrated that I am not up in Ft. Smith more often. Recently my friend Leslie Leong, a photographer, and I spent an afternoon with Maryanne MacDonald taking a series of photos of her. She laughed the whole time. Maryanne was pounding dry meat (to tenderize it) with the flat end of a hatchet when we arrived and later showed us some of the beautiful moccasins she'd made and the bread she'd baked. Maryanne is turning ninety this fall and her family is planning a party for her. Mary Heron is getting used to her new senior citizens unit although she still grumbles that it is too small. There was a bumper crop of cranberries in late August and Mary enjoyed going out with friends, picking and talking. She not only wants to continue working together, she expects it.

The picture included of Mary Heron shows her with Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. It was taken at the Akaitcho Tribal Council (four First Nations) assembly held in Ft. Fitzgerald, Alberta, last June (2005). I came up from Edmonton to attend it. As Raymond Beaver and I drove in towards Smith, we saw a large lightning strike which looked, to us, like it had hit just across the river. We soon heard there was a fire out toward Fitz. where the first day of the Akaitcho tribal assembly was being held. The meeting had been interrupted mid-afternoon with a request to evacuate, get back to Ft. Smith, and now the road was cordoned off. Always interested in fire fighting, Raymond wanted to go out to the landslide overlook to see if we could see anything. Other people were watching too, lined up along the road: people from the community and others in town for the assembly. We could see where more strikes had hit, puffs of smoke going up, and water bombers flying off to fill up in one of the first lakes, thirty miles to the east. Everyone was talking.

The next day, the second day of the assembly, the road to Fitz. was open and the meeting was on again. However, by lunchtime the Sergeant of the local RCMP detachment was urging us to leave. Excited, he said, "I can't guarantee your safety. You're taking your life in your hands if you don't leave." Nevertheless, used to fires the organizers decided to wait and see. However, the Sergeant was back again a couple of hours later requesting an immediate evacuation of the reserve. After speaking with him, Magloire Paulette, the acting chief of Smiths Landing First Nation, decided to go ahead canceling the ceremony, which Chief Fontaine had come in for: the dedication of a monument commemorating the signing of Treaty 8 on this spot over a hundred years earlier.

The third morning, although the fire wasn't out, we were able to go back to Fitz. Francoise Paulette spoke:

> "Some of us have talked about what happened here yesterday. We are still being told where to go, what to do. This is still colonization, we need to trust the grandfathers; we need to trust our own experts. Don't get overly worried aboutthis fire. We need to believe in ourselves and that we will be protected."

At lunch I sat with Raymond and a bunch of other experienced firefighters. Without degrees, they were no longer employable as crew bosses despite many years of experience. They grumbled about how they would fight the fire: "The fire was small; it would be easy to cut it off, to put it out." Coming up behind us, dressed in a yellow fire fighting suit, was a tall white man, the newly arrived fire boss from Alberta Forestry. Sensing the criticism, he asked the men "What would *you* do then?" Raymond Beaver answered, "*We'd* put it out," and the other men nodded. Nothing more was said.

As I drove out of the community on my way home the next day, I saw trailer after trailer and numerous caterpillar tractors all being brought in to set up a huge fire camp and wondered at the cost of fighting fires this way. Later, reading the Ft. Smith paper at home I noticed Mary Heron's comments on the fire:

> Slave River Journal, 6/15/05: How big do you think the fire was?
>
> Mary Heron: Oh, I don't know how big it was but with this fire and the rain, it's a big message. The message is we better shape up and get along.

Asking her about it later, she explained:

They [the Grandfathers] must be angry…
No matter what happens there's a reason,
        good or bad.
If anything bad happens,
        it's telling you —
        you have to start healing.

Look at what happened here.
We were in Fitzgerald,
        rain, fire, rain.
Why did they do it?
Everybody argues. . .
Really look at how nature done it.

Your life is like —
        well…fire is dangerous,
It could hurt you.
You act like a fire —
        you're angry.

The rain comes.
You could heal yourself.
That [anger] would go away.
Look at what happened now —
        rain put it out.

The problem is…
Lack of cooperation,
        lack of people connecting.
We get together – we shake hands.
It's slowly coming back,
        for years we were apart,
        we never done that like we used to.

We lost something…
    our love for each other.
When we hug each other, we're
    passing energy to each other
All this fire…
We need good energy.
Use your energy…
    use it in a good way.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Taken from *The Book of Dene* published by the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education in 1976. Translated from the French as told by Francois Beaulieu, the second to Emile Petitot, a French Oblate priest, in the 1860's.

CHAPTER 16

ARRIVAL OF THE FRENCH AT GREAT SLAVE LAKE

I, who am telling this story, saw the French arrive here, with my own eyes.

2. This is how it happened.

3. One day a boat arrived containing a party of French men with their two leaders.

4. I was a young lad, living with my parents.

5. I am part French, you know, but my mother was a Dene and my grandmother a Cree, so I have a mixture of three bloods flowing in my veins.

6. Any way, when the French arrived, they went to my Uncle Jack's house.

7. "Do any of you speak French?" they asked.

8. "Of course, we are of French descent," we replied.

9. Then the leader said to Uncle Jack, "You can act as our interpreter, seeing

as you are Metis.

10. “There was an Englishman in the
group called James who understood both
French and Chipewyan, I believe.

11. “Now said the leader, whose
name was Peter Pond, “Call all the Dene
people together!”

12. My uncle called everyone together
and people arrived in great numbers by
canoe.

13. Living in that area were Slaveys,
Dogribs, and Yellowknife Indians and
people came from the Mackenzie too.

14. At that time there was a lot of fighting with the Dogribs,
but on that day peace was made for ever.

15. “Now, who is your leader?” Peter Pond asked the Dogribs.

16. “This man, Dog’s Son, he is our leader,” they replied.

17. “Right, Dog’s Son, you alone will be
the chief and you will speak to the Dene
people for us.

18. We are French and we are good people.
We don’t kill the Dene for we like them
and we wish to trade meat and furs in
exchange for clothes and other articles which
we shall give you,” said Peter Pond.

19. “You tell your people that in exchange
for lots of furs we shall give you
many things which will make life much
easier and more pleasant for you.

20. See this linen, this cooking pot, this
axe and knife - we shall give you similar
things if you will give us furs in return.”

21. “What do you use to cook with,
Dog’s Son?” asked Peter Pond.

22. Dog's Son showed him a pot made
of woven roots.

23. "Oh, that's no good! This one of
mine is far better, it's a real pot!" said
the French man.

24. Dog's Son took the pot and
examined it very carefully, running
his hands all over it.

25. It was made of metal and very shiny.

26. "It is very pretty, he said, "and so
strong ! So heavy!"

27. That's because you put water in it
and suspend it over the fire, " explained
Peter Pond.

28. The French man cooked meat in
the pot and gave it to the Dene.

29. When everyone had eaten enough,
they had a dance.

30. "But this is nothing," said the
French leader.

31. "If you can give us lots of furs, and
lots of meat, the French will treat you
well and we'll give you lots of cooking
pots and many other things besides to
make life better for you."

32. "Then he gave Dog's Son many fine
things – a red tailcoat, a tall hat
with feathers in it, a big pot, a neckerchief, a
drinking mug, an axe, a knife, some
needles and thread and some tobacco, all for
nothing.

33. "Ha! Obviously you aren't familiar
with this stuff! Said the White Leader.
"It's called Tobacco."

34. He gave a pipe to each one and showed them how to smoke it.

35. However, as soon as they had taken their first puffs they exclaimed, “That’s terrible stuff! And they all began to cough and gag and make awful faces and some even threw up.

36. However, it was a happy evening and the dancing went on all night.

37. As I mentioned, I was only a boy at the time, no more than fifteen years old.

38. My uncle went off with the French in their boat to act as an interpreter for them.

39. All that I’ve told you took place at the end of Great Slave Lake on the Big Island, and I saw it all.

Appendix B

The Community and Environment

Located just north of the sixtieth parallel, Ft. Smith, earlier known as Thebachagie (at the foot of the rapids), was established by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1874. In earlier years, people from this area traveled to either Ft. Chipewyan or Ft. Resolution for trading purposes, although the Beaulieu family had done some trading out of Salt River prior to this time. The new post was located here with the expectation that, as Chief Factor MacFarlane recommended, steamboats would soon be traveling the waters of the Mackenzie system (Zaslow, 1971). Doing so would reduce reliance on the traditional boat brigades and increase the amount of goods coming in. Putting the local Beaulieu family, who had established a post here the year before by hiring Joseph Beaulieu to manage the post for HBC the first few years was a side benefit. The new post was named after the then Governor, Donald Smith. Smith earlier a HBC trader in Labrador won a famous debate with Louis Riel in Red River in 1869 turning the tide from rebellion. Shortly afterwards, he became Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company and later Lord Strathcona, famous for hammering in the trans-Canada railways' Golden Spike.

Ft. Smith is situated approximately one hundred and forty feet above the Slave River on a spruce rimmed embankment. Found on the west side of the river at the end of a sixteen-mile stretch of rapids, Ft. Smith was strategically located at the end of the portage required of all individuals and goods traveling further north. The series of four major sets of rapids found in the sixteen mile stretch between Ft. Fitzgerald and Ft. Smith is the only major obstacle to navigation in the seventeen hundred mile water transportation route from Fort McMurray, Alberta to the Arctic Ocean (Camsell, 1954; Mackinnon, 1980). This section of the Mackenzie River system was named the Slave by Samuel Hearne in 1771 (1955) after the people who were referred to as the Slavey's by his Chipewyan guide Mattonobee.

Ft. Smith is situated roughly equidistant from the two early settlements of Ft. Fitzgerald, Alberta (Thebathi- at the head of the rapids) and the older settlement of Salt River, established by the Beaulieu family in the late 1830's. What was known then as Smith's Landing was renamed Ft. Fitzgerald after the death of RCMP

Fitzgerald of the Lost Patrol. The community of Ft. Fitzgerald, at one time larger than Ft. Smith, was the take-out point for goods transported around the rapids in a variety of ways over the years, including oxen drawn Red River carts, wagons pulled by horses usually covered in mosquito netting, and later tractor trains. In earlier years canoes and York Boat brigades had traveled through the rapids making four portages.

Both Salt River and Ft. Fitzgerald were almost completely deserted in response to government centralization policy in the 1950's. In the case of Ft. Fitzgerald considerable government pressure was applied to force the relocation of families to Ft. Smith. Many of these families had great difficulty after the move to Smith. Former residents of both Ft. Fitzgerald and the Salt River settlement mention the good life and close communities they experienced there. In recent years a few families have moved back to these sites and a new hall was built in Ft. Fitzgerald by the Smith's Landing First Nation, following their recent settlement of outstanding claims based on Treaty 8 signed at then named, Smiths' Landing in 1899.

By 1907, an indicator of the growing prominence of Ft. Smith, the steamboats and the portage as an entry point for all goods coming into the Mackenzie, was that Fort Smith became the head post for the Mackenzie District (HBC), supplanting Ft. Simpson which had held this role since 1823 following the amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies. The increase in "free traders", including Colin Fraser, Hislop and Nagle and later Northern Traders (Zinovich, 1992), post confederation and the sheer amount of goods crossing the portage en route to the Mackenzie River communities meant control of the portage was essential. Following the opening of the Norman Wells oilfields in 1921, Ft. Smith became increasingly important not just to the trading companies and missions but to the Government of Canada as an administrative and transportation center. However, the discovery of gold in Yellowknife, the federal decision in 1964 to make Yellowknife the capital of the Northwest Territories and the opening of an all-weather road to Yellowknife transformed Ft. Smith from the center of northern development to in some ways the end of the road. Although reduced in size, Ft. Smith remains a regional government center with a substantial administrative staff. As well, Ft. Smith is the site of the Territorial Forestry Centre, two correctional institutions, the Headquarters of Wood

Buffalo National Park, and the main campus and headquarters of Aurora College (Ruttan, 1998). Wood Buffalo National Park, the largest national park in Canada also designated as a world heritage site, was established in 1922 in order to protect the wood bison and their habitat.

Until 1987 Ft. Smith was the administrative headquarters of the Mackenzie Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church. This meant a very substantial church presence of not only the Oblate Bishops, Priests and lay brothers, but as well, sisters from the Grey Nuns order who operated the hospital and schools. St Isidore's church located here and a residence, hospital and farm outbuildings soon followed. The church from x on operated its own boats and later owned an airplane as well. In 1987 church headquarters were moved to Yellowknife and the church presence greatly decreased. However, the town is still dominated by the large Catholic cathedral completed in 1964 in anticipation of a great future for Ft. Smith as the future capital of the Northwest Territories. Anglican and Pentecostal churches operate in Ft. Smith as well.

Ft. Smith is a small community, the population currently is 2, 625. However it is ten times bigger than it was after World War II. While the population of the town has grown, it has been fairly stable for the last forty years. During the forties, fifties and sixties families who had previously lived much of the time in the bush and all up and down the river moved into town. As Métis Elder Archie Laroque described this process;

> Nowadays, there isn't an axe in the bush no more…The government decided kids got to go to school. Well how could they go to school, if the only way to make a living is out in the bush, eh? That's where the family allowance came in. Kids had to go to school, or they couldn't get their family allowance. They couldn't go to school in the bush, so the women had to stay in town with the kids. The family allowance wasn't quite enough . . . so that's where the welfare came in. They needed more help. I saw that happening. I knew what was happening. Kids had to go to school so that changed their lives. The old man would not stay in the bush if his wife was in town (Maldaver, 1994, pp. 43-44).

In-migration from Ft. Chipewyan was fairly common during this period as well. Also increasing the population was the arrival of a group of French Canadians from the Lac la Biche, Alberta area who moved into the community in the 1950's. As well, an increasing number of government positions were developed to meet the needs of the growing bureaucracy. These factors led to an increased population within the community of Ft. Smith at that time (stabilizing at around 2 500 by 1965) and a significantly increased proportion of non-Aboriginal residents. Out migration is a significant factor thus the population is expected to remain at current levels for the foreseeable future. Currently, the Aboriginal population makes up over 60 percent of the community, with the Métis being the largest single group. Forty three percent of the population is under twenty-five years with only five percent over sixty-five (NWT Community Database, 1996).

Employment is found primarily in the administration of and provision of federal, territorial, and local government services including the town and three Aboriginal governments. Other areas of employment include retail, trades and construction, transportation, seasonal forestry labor, tourism and trapping (Ruttan, 1998). The total labor force participation rate (1994) is seventy percent, while the participation rate for the Aboriginal population is fifty-seven percent (Government of the NWT, 1997). While overall income is high, disparity between ethnic groups shows a significant spread, with $75, 000 for non-Aboriginal and $46, 000 for Aboriginal families (GNWT, 1997). Employment of Dene and Métis community members in professional services has increased in recent years following the implementation of advanced education and training programs and an affirmative action policy by the Government of the Northwest Territories. Nevertheless, differential employment rates remain. Increasingly, community members are being hired at the new Diamond mines located in the barren lands north-east of Yellowknife.

The town is governed by a mayor and town council and elects an MLA to the Territorial legislative assembly. The largest Aboriginal group in the community is that of the Métis who make up approximately thirty-four percent of the population and are organized as a local of the Métis Nation of the Northwest Territories. This organization is currently seeking a claims settlement with the federal government. The

Ft. Smith Métis are made up of a unique Métis population indigenous to the South Slave region and established here well before the Red River settlement in Manitoba. However, over the years they were also joined by Métis leaving the Red River region both for political and economic reasons (Slobodin, 1981, Devine, 1998; Bellman & Hanks, 1998). The Ft. Smith Métis have been known for their relationships with large extended families, their ties to the Catholic Church, their hard work especially in the transportation sector and for technical ingenuity (Slobodin, 1981).

The Fitz-Smith Native Band became two First Nations reflective of their Salt River and Smith's Landing origins in 1997, after operating as one band since 1909 when they were required to do so by government. Treaty 8 was signed in 1899 with Pierre Squirrel becoming the first chief (See Appendix C for list of chiefs).The Salt River First Nation and the Smith's Landing First Nation have both recently settled land claims under the TLE (Treaty Lands Entitlement) process after twenty-five years of negotiation. Both bands include Chipewyan and Cree members. While English is the main language in use, both Chipewyan and Cree are spoken in the community primarily by people over fifty, however increasingly the importance of language learning for children is stressed.

Most Chipewyan community members were originally part of three bands who typically were associated with Salt River, Ft. Fitzgerald (Smith's Landing) and Thekulthi Lake, northeast of Ft. Smith at the edge of the barren lands. Cree families are reported to have arrived during the early to mid twentieth century from nearby regions of northern Alberta. As with other subarctic peoples the Chipewyan and Cree are noted to hold a high regard for independence, a balance of men's and women's roles, respect for Elders and for spiritual ways of knowing (Brightman, 1993; Honigmann, 1981a & b; Malloch, 1984; Sharp, 1987, 1995; J.G. E. Smith, 1981a, 1981b).

Environmental context

Ft. Smith experiences long, cold winters with frequent northern lights and warm, short summers with long days. The mean temperature in January ranges between minus twenty and minus thirty degrees centigrade and plus fifteen and plus twenty degrees centigrade in July. Located in the boreal forest, the community has a history of reliance on a mixed economy (Usher, 1981) including summer wage labor and hunting and trapping. The mainstay of the trapper was usually either beaver or muskrat depending on which cycle was high. Additionally lynx, fox and wolves were desirable and other small furs such as mink and marten trapped in certain areas as well. While some Elderly men continue to trap on a regular basis, most hunting and trapping is now done as a weekend pursuit. Caribou, bison, moose, ducks, grouse, ptarmigan, rabbits and fish all contribute substantially to the local diet (Bill and Crozier, 1996; Wein et al, 1992). Country foods are valued not only for their nutrient value and supplement to the economy but also for their cultural and spiritual significance (Bill and Crozier, 1996; Wein, et al, 1992). For example, "dry meat" has both a cultural and nutritional significance and is enjoyed by children and adults. Salt, crystallized from brine seeping out from the base of an escarpment formed by Glacial Lake O Connor (Camsell, 1954), is found on the Salt Plains, and now located in Wood Buffalo National Park. Historically, the salt found here was used by Aboriginal people to preserve foods (Gunn, 2000; Mackenzie, 1971; Back, 1970) and for healing purposes and for trade (Beaver, 7/02). During the fur trade and mission period this salt was an essential item and its presence noted by explorers and traders.

Birds include the endangered whooping crane whose breeding grounds are located within Wood Buffalo National Park. As well, the northernmost colony of white pelicans found in Canada nest on an island in the Slave River and feed on the fish found in the eddies of the rapids.. Older people comment on the decrease in numbers of song birds in recent years, a pattern occurring throughout the boreal forest (Savage, 2004). The boreal forest cover is made up on varying combinations of black and white spruce, jack pine, tamarack, balsam poplar, trembling aspen, and paper birch (Gunn, 2000). Fire, primarily caused by lightning, is a common factor in the regional ecological picture. Summers arrives along with an abundant insect population with mosquitoes, "bulldog" flies, black flies, no see ums and "hair-eaters" (flying beetles) being the most notorious. Berries are collected and some plants, especially rat root for colds and sore throats, continue to be used for medicinal purposes (Wein et al, 1992; Malloch, 1984).

The bison, their population health and the environmental and political factors involved have, for over a hundred years, been and continue to be the focus of much disagreement between government managers, biologists and local residents (Carbyn et al, 1998; Maldaver, 1993). Included in this debate is the impact of close to seven thousand plains bison brought from Wainwright, Alberta, between 1926 and 1928, who then inter-bred with the local wood bison introducing diseases assumed to have resulted in a decreased population (Gates et al, 1997; Sandlos, 2002). While at a low of 2500 in 1994, and a high of 12, 000 in the 1950s when wolf control was practiced, management practices, drowning and wolf and human predation have all been held responsible for decreasing population figures, nevertheless, the population is currently on the rise once again baffling explanation (Carbyn, 2003). Bison disease remains a contested issue primarily due to Agriculture Canada's concerns regarding the possible transmission of brucellosis and TB to cattle located in northern Alberta, not far from the southeast end of the park (Carbyn, 2003). Changes in the environment related to the impact of the Benett Dam in the province of British Columbia, changes in habitat and wildlife health, pollution from pulp mills and global warming are also of concern to local residents. Trends related to global warming are expected to impact water levels already reduced by the Bennett Dam, decrease the low end of temperatures and increase the number of warmer days, and to result in an increase in the number and severity of forest fires (Mackenzie River Basin Study, 1997)

Despite the extremes of weather and a short growing season, gardens do well due to the long summer days. In fact, Ft. Smith is known not only as "the Education Capital" due to its early high school, vocational and college programs, but also as "The Garden Capital of the Northwest Territories." The Catholic Mission ran farms at various times due to the need to grow potatoes and vegetables for the Catholic missions and schools found throughout the Mackenzie District (Gunn, 2000; Dept. of Education, 1974). Until the mid-1980's, large potato fields located on the Catholic mission lands in the downtown area of Ft. Smith were cultivated each year. Cattle for both work and dairy were bred and meat and butter produced locally before a road into the community was built (Gunn, 2000). French speaking Albertans arriving from northern Alberta (Plamondon) in the 1950's tried to make a go of farming in the Salt

River area but eventually gave up due to the salt leaching out of the soil. At one time horses were not uncommon in the community, not only for use on the portage but also as saddle horses for travel into the bush for early fall moose hunts (Seton, 1981). Currently one very small farming operation and green house for bedding plants is located just outside the community.

The Community structure and services

Fort Smith is served by two medium sized grocery and dry goods stores, a drug store, two gift stores, one book store, a supplier of lumber and construction materials, three restaurants, a small movie theater, a small engine sales and repair store, two video rental and sundry supplies stores, an office supply store, a cable TV service, three gas and service stations and two oil and gas distributors. The RCMP detachment provides local policing services including three holding cells. It is usually staffed by a Sergeant and five constables each typically serving an approximately two-year term in Ft. Smith. A Justice of the Peace court is held regularly in the community and Territorial court comes to Ft. Smith as part of the Territorial circuit court system on a regular basis. Superior Court is held as needed. Many cases are alcohol related and minor offenses resulting in probation or sentencing to less than two years in a territorial facility. Other social and health services include drug and alcohol counseling and youth drop–in programs, employment and training programs offered in conjunction with financial assistance programs, child welfare and probation programs, and federally funded programs, administered by local aboriginal organizations, aimed at providing prevention and early intervention services for Aboriginal parents, babies, and young children.

Although the positions are difficult to fill and often only filled through the use of short term “locums”, three doctors staff the Health Centre and nurses are employed in both the health clinic and the small hospital ward. Serious emergent conditions and surgeries are sent by air to hospitals in Yellowknife or Edmonton. Births are no longer a regular service of the community health centre. Two local midwives, licensed in the province of Alberta, who offer midwifery services independently, are currently working with the health board to determine the viability of offering midwifery assisted births in conjunction with the health centre. Additional health care services include Home Care and Public Health services and an intermediate care facility. The availability and quality of health care remains a significant concern to local residents (Ruttan, 1998). Residents perceive cancer as being on the rise, also diabetes, heart disease, obesity and asthma in children (Ruttan, 1998)

The Western Arctic has gone from most physically fit region of Canada to the least fit since the introduction of television and snowmobiles (Book, 5/15, 2001). Nevertheless, the community of Ft. Smith has an active recreation program including a new recreation centre. Housed in the recreation centre is a curling rink, gym and fitness equipment. Hockey and figure skating are offered in the local arena. A small gym and youth drop-in centre are located at Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre. Recreational activities and organized sports are sponsored by high school, college and community recreation organizations. Dances are popular with both local people and college students attending Aurora College. Bingo is offered almost daily on television and by community organizations seeking to raise funds. In the winter snowmobiling is popular and both Aboriginal and many non-Aboriginal residents hunt.

A weekly newspaper, The Slave River Journal, offers weekly reporting and analysis of local events and political developments. CBC north provides radio coverage, including Aboriginal language programming and the local cable station offers a community announcements channel. Holidays such as Christmas, New Years and Canada Day are celebrated by all. Canada Day is a particularly favorite holiday, with its' roots in earlier Treaty Days and Dominion Day festivities, and includes a parade and community barbeque. A music and arts festival is held in August and a winter carnival in March.

Economic and political development

Following the 1921 opening of the Norman Wells oil fields Ft. Smith experienced an increasing importance as an administrative and transportation center. The school, hospital and government and church headquarters located here were meant to serve not only Ft. Smith but the entire Mackenzie region. The period following the First World War was one of relative prosperity as fur prices were high and resulted in both an influx of white traders and more competitive trading (Zaslow, 1984). During the 1930's fur prices dropped and a more difficult period ensued (Fumoleau, 1974; Zaslow, 1984).

Federal policy was primarily one of neglect until post World War II. Major efforts prior to that time were aimed at conservation of wildlife perceived to be under threat from Aboriginal populations (Fumoleau, 1974; Zaslow, 1967, 1984). A major change occurred in the outlook of the Canadian government following the entrance of United States Army to the northern field in an effort to safeguard Alaska and to provide oil from the Norman Wells oilfields for that effort. Massive amounts of equipment were freighted across the portage at Ft. Smith during a two year period. The U.S. Army built and upgraded roads, built a new airport and quarters for the hundreds of men required for this effort. These men, primarily segregated black regiments from the southern United States, had a significant social and economic impact on the community as they outnumbered residents and brought a significant infusion of cash.

When they left it was quiet again but still a point had been turned towards increasing modernity and bureaucratic control. The need to assert greater authority over northern development and Diefenbaker's 1958 call to identify Canadians as northerners all on roads to prosperity, led to an increase in civil service working in government programs in the north of which Ft, Smith was a major beneficiary/recipient (Zaslow, 1984). Government policy until recent years was based primarily on a prevailing philosophy of legislation; assimilation and development. As the Council of the Northwest Territories located in Ottawa put it in 1966,

> "There are two ways in which people may dwell in the Canadian Northland. The one is to live as did the aboriginal inhabitants…The second way for people to dwell in the Canadian northland is to take north the trappings of civilization- houses, heat, stores, food, clothing, furniture, water supply, medical facilities, schools, electricity, radio communications, air transportation, motor vehicles, books music, cameras, movies, clubs, churches (Zaslow, 1967, p. 171).

To the federal government the choice was assumed as it was to the white employees and their families increasingly hired from "the south" until the late twentieth century. Accounts by the white wives of Hudson's Bay officials in the twenties recount the challenges for these women in terms of the need for the goods and communication processes of "civilization", the impact of isolation, the tensions between the women related to status within the white community and their relationships what they term the "dusky females" of the local community (J. Godsell, 1959; Kelcey, 2001; Rourke, 1928). Taken for granted was the provision of "chore boys", local men who were employed to take care of the wood and water requirements of their homes. Notably, of these non-Aboriginal residents while some were life-long community members most were not. Even today many of these residents, although less so than in the past, see their time in Ft. Smith as offering good short term career opportunities in an interesting but often difficult environment. Many find the differences in perspective from that of southern Canada frustrating particularly when facing how to "get things done" when overall community cooperation is required. In contrast, permanent residents while sometimes expressing frustration with the community in terms of local political dynamics and factionalism by family groups most community members experience Ft. Smith as a homeland rich in both the ups and downs of family and environment.

The gradual devolution of authority to the territorial legislative assembly instead of a Council and Commissioner based in Ottawa led to the development of a unique consensus style territorial government in Yellowknife. At the same time, the rise of strong Aboriginal leaders and organizations from the 1970's on led to the development of the ground breaking Dene Declaration of Rights in 1977. From then onward efforts were aimed to promote the settlement of land claims outstanding since the signing of Treaty 8 in 1899 and 1900 and Treaty 11 in 1921 have challenged the philosophy held by earlier government assimilative assumptions and led to increasing autonomy of local and regional Aboriginal governments. While Ft. Smith bands were active on the earlier comprehensive claims process required by the federal government they pulled out of these negations in 1990 due to the undermining of Treaty rights. Despite tough federal resistance they were eventually able to settle based on a TLE process.

As a result of former clauses in the Indian Act regarding liquor and marriage of women to non-status men many residents experienced the loss of Indian status thus both bands have experienced the addition of new members reestablished through the processes put in place by Bill C-31. Treaty 8, along with the Indian Act, has had a major influence on the lives of the Aboriginal people in this community. In his journal written at the time commissioner Mckenna acknowledges misleading the people regarding game regulations saying that if he hadn't he wouldn't have been able to get the treaty signed (Daniel, 1999). Local people indicate this treaty, based from their view in peace and friendship rather than land surrender, has meant control by outside agents and required a hundred year process to obtain the land, resource and cultural rights promised both in written and oral form at the time of the Treaty settlement. At the time of the Treaty, Métis were offered scrip often based both on self identification as Métis and on RC priests evaluation of their lifestyle as more Métis or Dene like (Fumoleau, 1974/2004). In 1973 a caveat was filed with the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories (1973, 1977) regarding the nature and intent of Treaty 8. Groundbreaking at the time, it led the way to later land claims negotiation and was groundbreaking in it's reliance on oral testimony. Additionally, Metis leaders have challenged Métis hunting rights in what is now Wood Buffalo Park in court and the recent Benoit case challenging taxation in Treaty 8 was initiated by a man originally from Ft. Smith and court testimony regarding oral history provided by Smith's Landing leader Francois Paulette.

In recent years, contributions to changing dynamics include greater numbers of Aboriginal employees in the civil service have played an increasingly influential role, territorial government policy has placed an emphasis on "community empowerment" initiatives, and importantly the settlement of land claims has meant an increasing shift in the community power dynamic in terms of increased power (and money) for Aboriginal organizations. These political shifts have raised concerns amongst residents regarding the degree of competition or cooperation that should be manifested by community groups related to the allocation of financial, natural and human resources and to overall community planning.

Appendix C. Chiefs of Salt River, Fort Smith and Ft. Fitzgerald Peoples since Treaty 8 (1899)

Chiefs, Fitz/Smith Band

- Chief Pierre Squirrel
- Chief Abraham Deneyutchele
- Chief Andre Deneyutchele
- Bobby Alex Deneyutchele
- Johnny Paulette
- Simon Waquan
- Alexandre Beggair
- Eddie Bird
- Fred Gibot
- Francois Paulette
- Gerry Cheezie
- Henry Beaver
- Raymond Beaver
- John Benwell
- Henry Beaver
- Frank Laviolette
- Lena Benwell
- Jerry Paulette
- Nora Beaver
- Johnny Paulette Sr.
- Alexis Jeremie

Band divides

Salt River First Nation	*Smith's Landing First Nation*
Jim Schaefer	Jerry Paulette
Victor Marie Jr.	Fred Daniels
Raymond Beaver	Jerry Paulette
Jim Schaefer	

Appendix D

And the Beans Were Like Gravel: Working the York Boats

So the community of Fort Smith it's really a community that served all the north.
I talked to Elders over on the York boats such as Paul King Beaulieu.
He's the oldest son of a King Beaulieu and he told me lots of stories.
I travel with him, just a boy, slough to slough, trapping rats.
I talked to the other men also on that portage, also worked under Chief Squirrel.
Like old Susie Kye (Susie Abraham), Boniface Boucher from Ft. Resolution.

Mountain Portage the road goes over the mountain.
It just goes straight up and straight down.
Everybody on those York Boats they gang up on one boat and pull it over.
That's how they make their portage. Manpower,
They bring the freight over and then they pull the York Boats over.
So they were pretty powerful men.
Then they take the boat on the skids.
Yeah, and then when they hit the hull, they go.
When it goes over, they try to hold it back some.
They don't stop till the boat hits the water, that's it.

The head oarsman was Chief Squirrel.
And actually the oarsmen run the men.
They're in charge. No man can do what he wants.
The freight is repacked, to come down the Mackenzie.
It come down the Athabasca, Slave, Mackenzie.
And they claim can be four hundred pounds they carry.
They carry over the portage, moving freight over.
So two men lift the pack put it on the guy with a pack strap
And they have a lot of fun too. Like the heavy packs going up,
some guys not as strong as the others, legs wobble. They're teasing.
Coming back they hit 'em in the ass with a strap. Laugh!
They can't do a damn thing! That's the way I was told.

I guess they worked pretty late in the evening too.
But Mountain Portage is only about four and a half miles from here.
So at night when they're finished they come,
run to Ft. Smith and they dance all night. Laugh.
They get back there just in the morning and lay down.
The cook gets up. They say they sleep forty minutes
and the cook is ringing the bell, frying pan.
Breakfast. He puts on the beans in the morning,
forty minutes and pour it on the plate and it's just like gravel.

That's the way they tell me. Laugh.
Cook beans pretty fast, they're still hard.
Put it on a tin plate, sounds like gravel.
And then the oarsmen call 'em, they won't get up,
And he goes after them with a pack-strap. Get 'em out. Laugh.
That's what I was told by the guy himself that got strapped on the ass.

Then when they come down here, they went across there.
Right close to shore there's two islands,
the farthest one, they call that Pemmican Island.
In winter people make dry meat, pemmican, and all sorts of stuff.
There's a big cache up there. It's a stage with legs on.
They land there, they pick up their supplies for the trip beyond.
They land at the island before they come across, they get ready.
Then they race across, coming across.
They claim Chief Squirrel he always win the race.
Some don't like that, different boats from all over.
Yeah, they land down the hill and I guess people go down there,
they eat there, and they probably camp there before they go on down.

And that's the way they travel according to Paul King Beaulieu told me.
They didn't stop at every community. First one: Ft. Resolution.
All boats travel together, they come ashore there then they unload.
Also they got a cache all the way along.
Down at Hook Lake, I guess there was Buffalo there.
But in my time there was no buffalo there.
But according to Boniface Boucher history,
they land there and there was a cache there,
buffalo, dry meat, pemmican and everything else.
They take what they need, got to save some for coming back.

So that's the way they travel to far as McPherson.
And they unload there, one trip a year, unload their supplies there,
And there they leave, come back load up with fur.
Every community put fur in.
They bring lots of fur piled way up in their oar boat.
That's a scow, that's a boat, there's no motor . . . just oars.
Then the extra men off the extra boat they leave.
Going south, fast water they put 'em on the track-line,
they "track-line" they call it, big long rope they pull,
the other guy steer the boat, keep the boat away from shore,
easier than oaring.

So I guess they bring back a lot of fur.
Then they come back here through the rapids.
And they tell me they get back to Athabasca, ice start running.

They leave there when the ice start to go, stop behind the ice.
And then actually they used to get twenty-five dollars and
tobacco or one of them red belts they used to call a Métis sash.
That was the only belt. Everybody get that.
So that's the history of the York boats, covers the whole river system
and the fur going back south and the basic supplies reaching the north.
Them days, people, some of them say it's more fun more than anything else.

Story told by Frank Laviolette based on narratives told to him by Paul King Beaulieu, Germain Tourangeau and others.

Excerpted from Ruttan, L. (2004 a.). The beans were like gravel: York boat crew members accounts. *Papers of the Rupert's Land Colloquium*. Pp. 351-364. Winnipeg, MB: The Centre for Rupert's Land Studies.

Appendix E

Ft Smith History: A Chronological Approach

1715 - William Stewart, of Hudson's Bay Company, first "white man" to enter the region.

1764 - Cree and Chipewyan Treaty at Peace Point.

1772 - Chipewyan leader, Matonnobee guides Samuel Hearne through on their return to Fort Churchill from the Coppermine River.

1778 - Peter Pond crosses Methy Portage into Athabaska system.

1780 - Major smallpox epidemic affects Chipewyan people from Hudson's Bay west.

1785 - Peter Pond makes first trading foray to Great Slave Lake.

1786 - Cuthbert Grant (Metis trader/explorer) looses five men in the rapids in an accident that gave the name, *Rapids of the Drowned*, to a set of rapids directly below Ft. Smith.

1789 - Alexander Mackenzie travels through on his way to explore a route assumed to lead to the to the pacific ocean via what has become known as the Mackenzie River, making five portages and getting through in one day.

1819 - Sir John Franklin, along with Back, Hood and Richardson, travels through the first time on his way to Arctic Coast. Guided by Yellowknife Chief Akaitcho and his brother Kiskorry winter in what was later called Fort Franklin and is now Deline.

1825-6- Sir John Franklin travels through on his way back and forth from the arctic

1832 - George Back passes through.

1850 - First priests begin visiting Beaulieu's community at Salt River, although they are headquartered at Fort Chipewyan or Ft. Resolution.

1854 - Beaulieu comes up with a new route through the rapids which he shows to Chief Factor Roderick MacFarlane. His men cut down the top of the ridge on Mountain Portage so that they boats can be set down there.

1856 - Fr. Grandin visits Salt River.

1858 - Vital Grandin is named Bishop.

1861 - Bishop Grandin set up a huge cross by the river, missionaries visited this site each year for next 25 years.

1862 - Formation of the Athabasca-Mackenzie Vicariate, Catholic Church.

1867 - Grey Nun's begin their involvement in the north, traveling to Ft. Providence to start a school.

1870 - Hudson's Bay Company and Great Britain surrender Rupert's Land and the Northwestern Territory to the new Dominion of Canada. The combined area was referred to as "the Northwest Territories."

1871 - Francois Beaulieu dies at Salt River.

1874 - Establishment of Hudson's Bay Post, Ft Smith. The post is named in honour of Donald Alexander Smith, Hudson's Bay Governor, later Lord Strathcona, and also a member of the first North West Territories Council.

1875 - Parliament passes the Northwest Territories Act appointing a Lieutenant Governor and councilors.

1876 - Salt River Mission transferred to Fort Smith from Ft. Resolution by Father Gascon, the mission was called St. Isidore.

1880 - Hudson's Bay Company establishes an outpost at Smith's Landing (later Fort Fitzgerald).

1886 - 1st Steamboat built and launched at Ft. Smith (Captain Smith), the *Wrigley*.

1894 - Unorganized Territories Game Act enacts closes season on buffalo after prompting by RCMP Commissioner Herchmer and travelers Whitney and Pike.

1895 - Catholic brothers build the *Saint-Alphonse*.

1897 - Royal Northwest Mounted Police detachment opened in Ft. Fitzgerald (primarily to enforce bison regulations).

1898 - Yukon Gold Rush., many prospectors travel through.

1898 - Rebuilding of the *Wrigley II*.

1899 - Treaty 8 signed at Smith's Landing by Chief Pierre Squirrel, and headmen Joseph Kiscorry (Suze Marie) and Michel Mandeville. No interference with hunting and way of life is promised for as long as the sun shines and the river flows.

1900 - Government sets further restrictions on bison hunting.

1905 - Alberta and Saskatchewan are made provinces with boundaries set at the sixtieth parallel. A commissioner of the Northwest Territories was appointed to administer the region with direction from the Governor in Council and the Minister of the Interior. The first commissioner was Lieutenant-Colonel White also Comptroller of the RCMP. The RCMP basically administered the region until 1920.

Under the Northwest Territories Act, first Commissioner responsible for governing the Northwest Territories appointed.

Catholic Church's new steamboat, *the Sainte-Marie*, launched (sold in 1912 to Hislop & Nagle).

1906 - Hudson's Bay Company Mackenzie headquarters transferred from Ft. Simpson to Ft. Smith.

1907 - Estimates of only 300 wood bison submitted in three separate accounts by naturalist Seton, naturalist Preble, and RNWMP Major Jarvis.

1908 - Fathers Brohan and Bremont paddle too close to Cassette Rapids and are drowned.

1910 - Mission site chosen by Bishop Breyant. Oblates open a saw mill.

1911 - Game Warden Service opened in Ft. Smith.

First Indian Agent appointed.

St. Bruno's farm built near Salt River.

1913 - The *Mackenzie River* is built and launched (Capt. James W. Mills).

1914 - Ground survey of buffalo range by zoologist F. Harper produces estimate of 500 Wood Bison.

Grey Nun's build their first hospital. The lumber comes from new HBC sawmill on Sawmill Island.

1915 - Smith's Landing is renamed Ft. Fitzgerald after RCMP officer Fitzgerald of the Lost Patrol.

1915 - Roman Catholic Day School opened.

1916 - Chief Squirrel requests that reserve lands be set aside under the conditions of Treaty 8 for the First Nations people of Smith's Landing, Ft. Smith and Salt River.

Addition to the hospital built.

1917 - The Department of the Interior informs Department of Indian Affairs that the lands selected could not be guaranteed pending the selection of lands for a Buffalo preserve.

Dr. MacDonald begins work in the region.

1918 - Flu Epidemic.

1920 - S. *S. Distributor* built.

RCMP detachment opened in Ft. Smith.

Oil Discovered in Norman Wells. New NWT Commissioner appointed (W.W. Cory) along with six councilors one of whom was designated Deputy Commissioner. The commissioner and councilors were Ministers or officials in the Departments of the Interior or Mines as well as the RCMP.

1921 - Federal Administration Building built. Crown Timber, Land, and Mining Recording offices are opened, 4 Administrative officers and 30 tons of building supplies are sent to Ft. Smith and 18 men were brought in for the construction period.

First bank in NWT opens in a tent in Ft. Smith.

First 2 automobiles are shipped in.

First flight to NWT stops in Smith on way to Norman Wells, owned by Imperial Oil.

First trial in the Mackenzie District, Judge and court party comes in from Edmonton. Albert Le Beau from Ft. Providence is tried for murder of his wife, found guilty and later hanged in Ft. Smith.

1922 - Wood Buffalo National Park is established.

1923 - St. Isidore's Church is built.

1925 - Governor-General Lord Byng of Vimy fame visits while taking a trip on the *Distributor* from Ft. Smith to Aklavik.

Royal Canadian Corps of Signals is established in Ft. Smith.

1925-8 - 6, 676 plains buffalo are brought in from Buffalo National Park near Wainwright, Alberta. The stock was originally from the United States (remnants of the Pablo herd). A fierce debate raged between government bureaucrats and ecologists over this action due to fears regarding the spread of disease and species preservation. The bison spread out quickly and hybridization and infection of Wood Bison occurs.

1926 - Bishop Breyat moves Oblate headquarters from Ft. Simpson to Ft. Smith.

1927 - The HBC builds a new compound surrounded by a picket fence and the Mackenzie Hotel.

Punch Dickens arrives in Ft. Smith, after an historic flight from Chesterfield Inlet across the barren lands. The American passengers are interested in mineral development.

1927- 8 -St Bruno's farm, which provided, meat, working animals, and butter for the Missions all down the river, is abandoned by the Mission due to the influx of southern bison into the cattle pastures, reduced manpower, and new agricultural lots in Ft. Smith. The Roman Catholic Mission is granted 160 acres of land near Ft. Smith and maintained the right to harvest the salt pits.

1928 - The *Immaculata* is launched by the Catholic Church.

First airport is built.

Spanish Flu epidemic "ravaged" communities on the river system. Tents are set up outside the hospital for extra patients.

1929 - An annual hunt of 20 bison per year is begun by WBNP to supply meat to missions and hospitals.

Dec.15, The first commercial air flight to NWT. First air mail deliveries piloted by famous bush pilot, Wop May. Prior to this winter mail was delivered from Ft. McMurray, Alberta by dog sled. Bishop Breynat becomes the first Canadian Bishop to make an air flight with pilot Punch Dickens.

1930 - Pilot Walter Gilbert, turns up in Ft. Smith after being presumed lost in search for the Franklin expedition. He flew and photographed 2 000 mile of Arctic coastline for mapping purposes.

The first public school is opened.

1931- District Agent McDougall estimates 12, 000 buffalo in the park. Most thorough survey yet by Soper estimates 7, 700 bison in 1933.

1932 - First visit by a governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, flown in to Ft. Smith by Walter Gilbert.

1934 - The Anglican Mission is established, church built in 1939-40.

1934 - Gold is discovered in Yellowknife, rush of miners and prospectors come through.

1936 - Bishop Breynat buys an airplane used to carry goods, personnel, and hospital patients from all across the Mackenzie District missions to their hospital in Ft. Smith.

1937 - The Canadian Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, visits Fort Smith.

1938 - The first public school is built. The Catholic Church continues their mission school and builds a much bigger facility. Ft. Smith children go to both schools.

1939 - Chief Pierre Squirrel dies after close to forty years as Chief.

1940 - Salt River Reserve is established.

1942 - Bishop Trocellieur is consecrated in St. Albert, AB.

The *Sant' Anna* launched by the Catholic Church.

The 388th Engineers Regiment (Separate) arrives in Ft. Smith. American soldiers build a new road to Fitzgerald, a tractor road to Hay River and a new airstrip-for transporting supplies for the construction of the new "Canol" oil pipeline between Norman Wells and Whitehorse.

1943 - Bishop Breynat resigns. Fr. Joseph Trocellier named new Bishop of Mackenzie.

A forest fire comes close to Ft. Smith.

1944 - Uranium used for the Atomic Bomb dropped on Hiroshima and mined at Great Bear Lake is transported over the portage.

1949 - Federal Day School opened.

1951 - W. Fuller estimates 12, 000 bison, large scale testing and slaughter of bison is begun.

1952 - St Ann's Hospital is built by the Grey Nuns, to serve the entire McKenzie region (110 beds).

1954 - Dept. of Indian Affairs and National Resources office opened in Ft. Smith to administer western Arctic, NWT Council, all settlements, forests, highways and Wood Buffalo National Park.

The grotto is built by the RC mission with the help of local children.

Last of three hangings, Fred Cardinal, takes place in Ft. Smith

1957 - Breynat Hall hostel for students opened.

1958 - Construction of the St. Joseph's Cathedral and the Pinecrest Hotel begun.

1959 - First federal school opened - J.B.Tyrell School

Fr. Paul Piche becomes the new Bishop of the Mackenzie. Construction of St. Joseph's Cathedral is completed in expectation that Ft. Smith would become the new territorial capital.

1962 - A road to Yellowknife from Hay River bypassing Ft. Smith is built.

Anthrax outbreak northeast of Wood Buffalo National Park and within the park in 1962 results in management through the use of helicopters to herd the bison away from infected areas as well as corrals and inoculation. An attempt is made to reduce the bison population in Grand Detour and to create a buffer between there and the Hook Lake anthrax infected bison.

Grandin College, a residence operated by the Catholic Church is opened for top high school students from across the NWT and run until 1986.

Chipewyan band of Ft. Smith becomes Fitz/Smith Band.

1963 - Two brick buildings for the public high school are begun and the school is opened in 1964.

St. Isidore's church is relaocated to an area above the riverbank and renamed St. Alphonse in honor of Father Alphonse Mansoz.

1964 - Fort Smith becomes a village with a semi-autonomous municipal government (six-man council, with three elected members and three appointed by the commissioner of the Northwest Territories).

1966 - Fort Smith becomes a town with a mayor and eight councilors. Paul Kaeser, Sr. becomes the first mayor.

Road between Ft. Smith and Hay River opened.

Brother Sarreault opens a museum.

1967 - Vicariate of Mackenzie becomes a Diocese. Paul Piche is the first Bishop.

The Government of the Northwest Territories is established and moved from Ottawa to Yellowknife (rather than to Ft. Smith as had been expected). The government continues to use the model of a commissioner with an advisory council.

1968 - Major river-bank landslide occurs. Several buildings are destroyed and 1 person is killed (Aug, 9).

St. Alphonse church relocated to near the cemetery.

1969 - Ft Smith becomes a Regional Government Center administering all settlements on Great Slave Lake, the Mackenzie River north to Wrigley, and the Arctic Coast from Holman Island to Pelly Bay. A large federal presence remains in the community.

1970 - Indian Brotherhood established.

Grey Nuns discontinue education operations and the Territorial Government purchases the Grandin extension for use as PWK High School. Diocesan Religious education centere opened in old St. Ann's hospital building.

1972 - Métis Association of the Northwest Territories incorporated.

1973 - Paulette Case leads to the government's agreement to negotiate Aboriginal rights in the NWT.

1975 - The Dene Declaration of principles is produced in a joint assembly of the Indian Brotherhood and Métis Association.

1977 - Justice Thomas Berger holds hearings throughout the Mackenzie in regards to the Mackenzie Valley pipeline proposal.

1978 - The Indian Brotherhood of the NWT is renamed becoming the Dene Nation.

1979 - New Fort Smith Health Centre opened. Government takes over health services.

1980- First St. Ann's Hospital demolished.

1981 - Negotiations of joint Dene/Metis Claim begins.

AVTC expands and later becomes Arctic College (Aurora College).

1984 - Hearings held on Slave River Dam proposal

1985 - Bill C-31 passed.

Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre completed.

1986 - Bishop Piche retires. He dies in 1992 and is buried in the cathedral crypt along with former Bishops Trocellier, Faraud, and Fallaize.

The new Federal building si completed.

1987 - Pope John Paul's visit in Ft. Simpson is attended by many from Ft. Smith.

1988 - An Agreement in Principle for the joint Dene-Metis claim is signed at Ft. Rae.

1989 - Young Offenders facility completed.

1990 - Public Hearings as part of the Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Panel (EARP) regarding a response to the problem of diseased bison is held in Ft. Smith. The panel later recommends complete eradication of the herd. WBNP staff and the community are opposed to this option.

1990 - The Dene/Metis claim falls apart. The Gwichin and Sahtu Dene and Metis request regional claims. Canada announces it will now, contrary to earlier policy disallowing settlement north of the 60the parallel, negotiate regional claims.

1997 - Sheila Copps agrees to selection of some TLE lands within WBNP.

2000 - Smith's Landing settles and signs (2/25) TLE Claim

2002 - Salt River First Nation settles and signs (6/22) TLE claim.

2004 - Second St. Anns hospital taken down after years of not being used.

2005 - Telephone and internet cable laid to Ft. Fitzgerald.

Appendix F

Epidemic on Great Slave Lake, 1928 and Discussion of "Virgin Soil Epidemics"

The account below was written by Helge Ingstad, a young Norwegian, who trapped in the late 1920's in the area northeast of Ft. Smith and southeast of what was then Snowdrift (Lutsel'ke), on Great Slave Lake. He later went on to become an archeologist and excavated L'Anse au meadows in Newfoundland.

"As I come gliding into a cove where a number of teepees are pitched near the beach, I am met by a singular stillness. No children are playing about the camp, no men come running down to the lake to give me a hand with the canoe. No living thing is in sight, save the dogs, skulking about the teepees.

As I step ashore, I notice some canoes, half loaded with all kinds of gear, as though their owners were in the act of moving. Up at the edge of the woods I come upon a man sitting on a stump. He rocks from side to side, his face buried in his hands. It is Drybone. "Hello!" I call. "What's up?"

He looks at me with red, streaming eyes and says: "White man's sickness. All Indian sick. Some die, me pretty soon, too." And with that, he buries his face back in his hands and moans softly.

I go from teepee to teepee, and a most sorrowful spectacle meets my gaze. On the bare earth strewn with spruce twigs lie the huddled forms of the sick – men, women and children. Wrapped up in skins and filthy rags. They are shivering though the air is stifling inside, and they cough up blood and stare at me with strange eyes.

Off in the woods I find three corpses, covered over with aspen leaves.

An old woman is the only one who has escaped the ravages of the diseases. She is sitting in front of one of the teepees and is staring vacantly off into space. The epidemic struck suddenly, she tells me, shortly after several of the hunters returned from a journey south. Of late the people of the camp have been unable to procure food, for no one was strong enough to haul in the nets. She begs me to help her bury the dead before the ravens can get at them. And then the camp must be moved over to the nearest island, for to remain here where the evil spirit reigns will mean that death will surely claim them all.

With the aid of a hunting knife and a crude spade carved from wood, I manage to dig a groove in the earth deep enough, with some crowding, to accommodate the three corpses. Over a covering of moss and turf I plant a cross made from two sticks lashed together and then according to ancient Indian custom, I surround the grave with a fence of tall pointed poles.

In the meantime the old woman has made a fire down on the beach and is burning up all the personal possessions belonging to the dead. Then we get busy breaking up the camp. We take down the teepee and roll them up into small compact bundles, and one by one, I carry the sick down to the canoes. Room is found for the dogs and we shove off, I in one canoe, the Indian woman in another.

Seldom have I experienced such a weird melancholy feeling as I did on this particular voyage. In front of me in the bottom of the boat lie the sick, one on top of the other, all of them covered over with a layer of teepees, caribou-skins and rags. In the bow, a dozen Indian dogs tightly squeezed together. Some of them sit motionless, their heads on the gunwhale; others attempting to crowd back on top of the sick. In a twinkling, I must use the paddle to drive them back where they belong. Abreast of me glides the other canoe. In it sits the old squaw paddling. She is bare-headed, the wind rustling and clawing at her hair. But she pays no heed to this condition, merely keeps on paddling. Her face appears carved in stone, and there is a far-away look in her eyes. Round about us and bathed in sunshine, lies the heaving expanse of Great Slave Lake; off to the west there is a faint haze through which the dim outlines of the islands may be seen. Behind me stretches the mainland with its tiers of forest and bluish hills – The Indians Country . . .

When after a time we reach the nearest island, I set to work cutting poles and branches of spruce. Then I raise the teepees. It is midnight before I have finished pitching the camp and have comfortably installed the sick. About time to be getting home! Just as I am about to hop in the canoe, the old squaw approaches me with a dog she is holding on a leash. It is no more than a mass of shaggy hair and nothing much to look at, save for the eyes. "You take," she says. I explain to her that I want no pay for what I have done. "Kli nezon (Good dog)," she says, pointing to the animal. It had belonged to her husband whom I had but recently buried, and it would have been an insult to her had I refused, so I stowed the dog away on board and started off" (Ingstad, 1933, Pp. 150-152).

This experience is similar to that of other Indigenous peoples in the Americas where the survival rate of combined deaths from epidemics, social disruption and warfare estimated at a ten per cent survival rate is not uncommon. (Black, 1992). These tragic phenomena, often described as "virgin soil epidemics", are usually explained as a response to the lack of any built up immunity and, as well, perhaps exacerbated by genetic diversity in the immune system (Kormondy & Brown, 1998) in response to generations of contact or, in this case, lack of contact with livestock transmitted disease (Diamond, 1999). Black notes that in contrast to explanations of "genetic inferiority", genetically old-world and new-world individuals are very similar (Black, 1992). However, less variation in the number of immune system alleles in populations in the Americas, along with lack of any adaptive immunity, may mean greater risk to entire groups of related peoples (Black, 1992). This meant that everyone, in every age group, was vulnerable and, in fact, as is often the case when adults contract "childhood diseases," adults more so than children (Kormondy & Brown, 1998).

These viruses tended to occur in beachhead-like phenomena, wave following wave, allowing no sufficient recovery period physically, systemically and likely psychologically. As ecologists Edward Kormondy and Daniel Brown note:

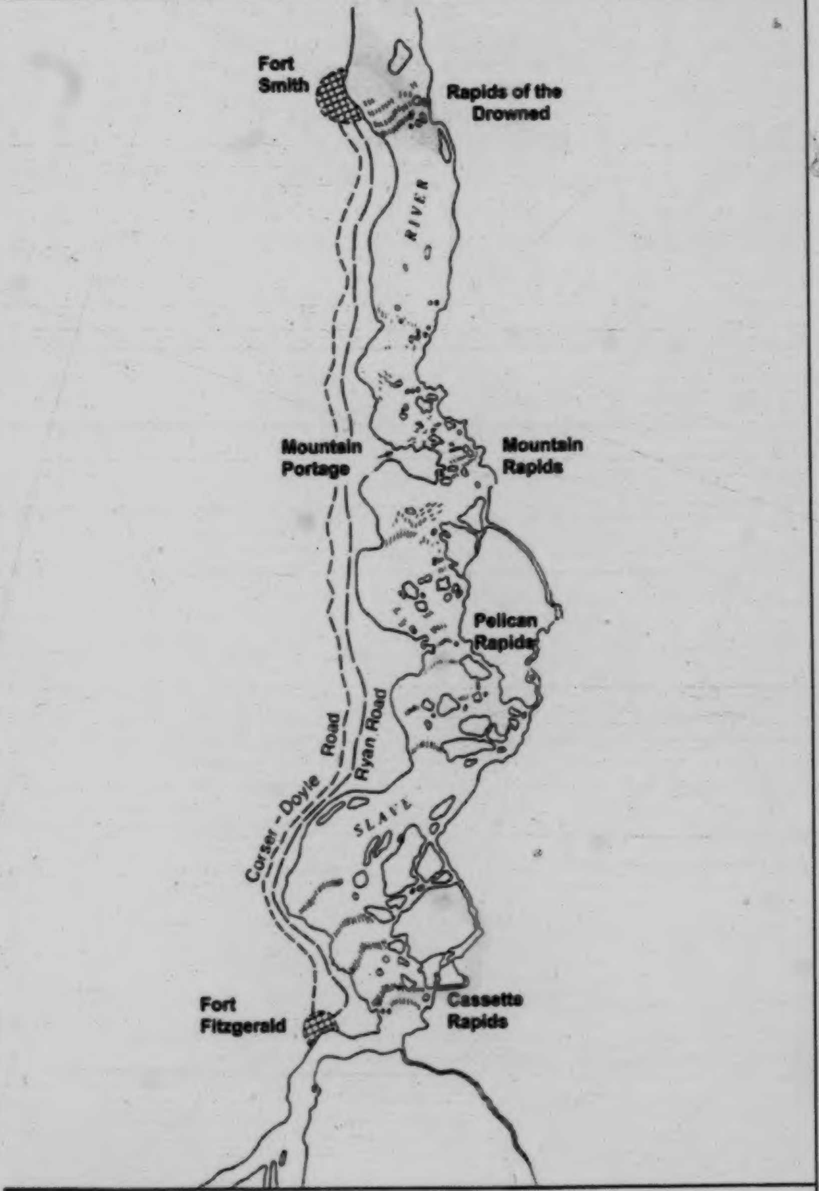
> The result would often be social disruption and even the collapse of the culture, particularly if the diseases occurred in conjunction with colonial or other invasive activity by the cosmopolitan culture. (p. 213).

Thus as Crosby (1986), Dobyns (1983), Thornton (1987) and others remind us (Churchill, 1998; Deloria; 1999; McNeil, 1976, & Sioui, 1992) "it is clear that these epidemics changed history" (Kormondy & Brown, 1998), both social and ecological, throughout the America's, including the subarctic (Fumoleau, 1974/2004; Krech, 1978). Samuel Hearnes estimate of a loss of 90% of the Chipewyan population is in line with Kiple and Becks (1997) estimate of 90% losses in the Americas.

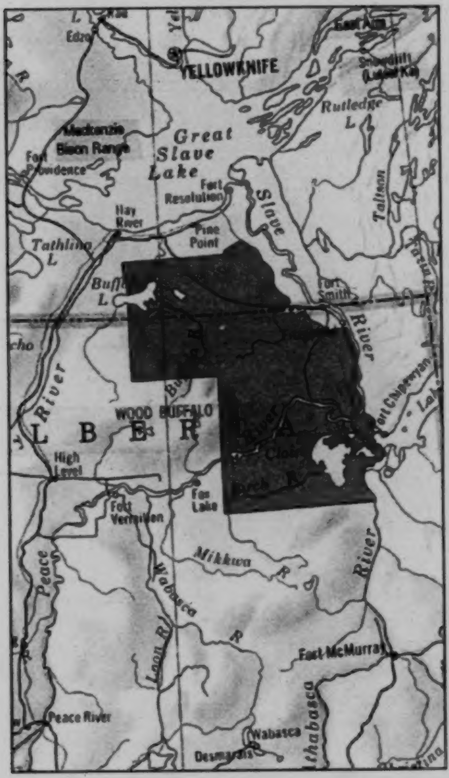
Appendix G

Maps

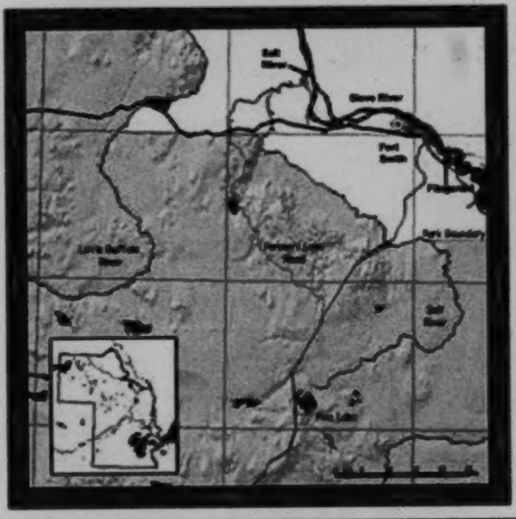
113°0'0"W
112°30'0"W
112°0'0"W
111°30'0"W
Km.
0 5 10 20
Grand Detour
Salt River


Fort Smith
Rapids of the Drowned
RIVER
Mountain Portage
Mountain Rapids
Pelican Rapids
Corser - Doyle Road
Ryan Road
SLAVE
Fort Fitzgerald
Cassette Rapids

Fort Smith Portage


Edzo
YELLOWKNIFE
East Arm
Snowdrift (Lutsel K'e)
Rutledge L
Mackenzie Bison Range
Fort Providence
Great Slave Lake
Fort Resolution
Slave
Taltson
Hay River
Pine Point
Tathlina L
Buffalo L
Fort Smith
River
Fort Chipewyan
WOOD BUFFALO
A L B E R T A
High Level
Fort Vermilion
Fox Lake
Peace
Mikkwa R
Wabasca R
Loon R
River
Fort McMurray
Peace River
Wabasca
Desmarais
Athabasca

Fort Smith and Wood Buffalo National Park


Salt River
Slave River
Fort Smith
Park Boundary
Little Buffalo River
Salt River
Pine Lake